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P L A Y.

BY

THOMAS SOUTHERNE, ESQ.

Author of "The School for Scandal,"

etc.

and Author of the Last and Best Editions of
"The Merchant of Venice."

With a New Introduction by
John Dryden, Esq., and
An Appendix containing
the Poems of Mr. Southerne.

London: Printed for
T. DODSLEY, 1750.

1750. 12mo.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE,
A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS,
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
WITH AN APPENDIX,

Digitized by Google

P L A Y S

WRITTEN BY

THOMAS SOUTHERNE, Esq.

NOW FIRST COLLECTED.

WITH

An Account of the LIFE and WRITINGS of the
A U T H O R.

—Your tributary tears we claim,
For scenes that Southerne drew ; - a fav'rite name.
He touch'd your fathers hearts with gen'rous woe,
And taught your mothers youthful eyes to flow :
For this he claims hereditary praise,
From wits and beauties of our modern days.

HAWKESWORTH.

V O L. II.

L O N D O N,

Printed for T. EVANS, near York-buildings ; and
T. BECKET, corner of the Adelphi, Strand.

MDCCLXXIV.

THE
WIVES EXCUSE;
OR,
CUCKOLDS MAKE THEMSELVES.

A
C O M E D Y.

As it was Acted at the
THEATRE ROYAL,
By Their MAJESTIES SERVANTS,
In the YEAR 1692.

Nihil est his, qui placere volunt, tam adversarium, quam expectatio.
CICERO.

VOL. II.

B

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THO. WHARTON, Esq.

Comptroller of His MAJESTY's Household.

S I R,

E VERY man of fortune has the power of doing a good turn, but there must be more in the man one would chuse to be obliged to : I have a thousand obligations to you, and have confessed them, upon every occasion : I have enjoyed the benefit of your favours ; and have the pride of them yet in my heart, that you have not thought so much good-nature thrown away upon me. I would make you what amends I could, and a dedication is all that I have in my power to return : 'tis a poetical payment indeed, which, while it discharges one debt, is running into another, begging your protection for a play, which will almost need your interest to defend : I will not contend a point, where most voices are to carry it : but as I designed this play for you, when some people thought well of it,

B 2

I hope

I hope it does not lessen the present, that every body does not. It is only the capacity and commendation of the common mistresses to please every body, to whom I will leave some of my critics, who were affronted at Mrs. *Friendall*: for those sparks, who were most offended with her virtue in public, are the men that lose little by it, in private; and if all the wives in town were of her mind, those mettled gentlemen would be found to have the least to do, in making them otherwise: but if *she* was of evil example, *Witwoud* makes amends for her, in the moral of her character; where the women are manifestly safer in the possession of a lover, than in the trust and confidence of a friend: but she was no more understood to the advantage of the men, than the Wife was received in favour of the women. As to the music-meeting, I always thought it an entertainment reasonably grown up into the liking of the town: I introduced it, as a fashionable scene of bringing good company together, without a design of abusing what every body likes; being in my temper so far from disturbing a public pleasure, that I would establish twenty more of them, if I could: and for the billet-doux, that was put into Mrs. *Sightly's* hand, upon leading her out, I have heard of such a thing in a church before now, and never thought the worse of the place.

These, sir, are capital objections against me; but they hit very few faults: nor have they mortified me into a despair of pleasing the more reasonable part of mankind. If Mr. *Dryden's* judgment goes for any thing,

thing, I have it on my side: for, speaking of this play, he has publicly said, the town was kind to Sir *Antony Love*, I needed them only to be just to this: and to prove there was more than friendship in his opinion, upon the credit of this play with him, falling sick last summer, he bequeathed to my care the writing of half the last act of his tragedy of *Cleomenes*, which, when it comes into the world, you will find to be so considerable a trust, that all the town will pardon me for defending this play, that preferred me to it. If modesty be sometimes a weakness, what I say can hardly be a crime: in a fair *English* trial both parties are allowed to be heard; and without this vanity of mentioning Mr. *Dryden*, I had lost the best evidence of my cause. Sir, I have the privilege of a dedication to say some fine things of my patron; but I will be as little impertinent as I can, and only beg leave to say some true ones, and no more than I have always declared in the absence of Mr. *Wharton*, that (without the advantage of your family, and fortune) you are the very man I would chuse to be, if I could: I would have the force of your understanding, and knowledge of mankind, to make a fortune out of the public busness of the world: or, if I were to mend my condition more to my own humour, and a way I should like better than through the hurry of a crowd, your wit and conversation, your person and address, would best recommend me to the women. I do not know, sir, how successful you have been with that fair sex; but I would not have it lye at any fair lady's door, (who has a mind to be justified in dis-

posing of herself) that she could not distinguish in your favour, against all the pretenders of the town. If you have any enemies among the women, I must think, it is in a great measure because it was impossible to engage them to be all your friends. Sir, I am a well-wisher to all your interests, and be pleased to accept of this dedication of my respects, as an offering of my inclination, as well as a duty from my gratitude.

I am, SIR,

Your very much obliged

Humble servant,

T. SOUTHERN E.

TO

Mr. SOUTHERNNE,

On his Comedy, called The

WIVES EXCUSE.

SURE there's a fate in plays ; and 'tis in vain
 To write, while these malignant planets reign :
 Some very foolish influence rules the pit,
 Not always kind to sense, or just to wit.
 And whilst it lasts, let buffoonry succeed,
 To make us laugh ; for never was more need,
 Farce, in itself, is of a nasty scent ;
 But the gain smells not of the excrement.
 The Spanish nymph, a wit and beauty too,
 With all her charms, bore but a single show :
 But, let a monster Muscovite appear,
 He draws a crowded audience round the year.
 May be thou hast not pleas'd the box and pit ; }
 Yet those who blame the tale, commend thy wit ; }
 So Terence plotted ; but so Terence writ. }
 Like his thy thoughts are true, thy language clean,
 Ev'n lewdness is made moral in thy scene.
 The hearers may for want of Nokes repine,
 But rest secure, the readers will be thine.
 Nor was thy labour'd drama damn'd or hiss'd,
 But with a kind civility dismiss'd :

With such good manners as the * Wife did use,
 Who, not accepting, did but just refuse.
 There was a glance at parting; such a look
 And bids thee not give o'er, for one rebuke.
 But if thou wou'dst be seen, as well as read;
 Copy one living author, and one dead;
 The standard of thy style, let *Etherege* be:
 For wit, th' immortal spring of *Wycherly*.
 Learn after both, to draw some just design,
 And the next age will learn to copy thine.

JOHN DRYDEN.

* The Wife in the play, Mrs. Friendall.

P R O-

P R O L O G U E:

Spoken by Mr. BETTERTON.

Gallants, you're welcome to our homely cheer :
If you have brought your English stomachs here,
We'll treat you, as the French say, chere entiere. }
And what we want of humour, or of wit,
Make up with your she-neighbours in the pit ;
For on the stage whate'er we do, or say,
The wizard-masks can find you better play :
With all our pains, we can but bring 'em in ;
'Tis you must take the damsels out again :
And when we've brought you kindly thus together,
'Tis your fault if you're parted by foul weather.
We hope these natural reasons may product,
In every whoremaster, a kind excuse
For all our faults, the poet's, and the players.
You'll pardon ours, if you can find out theirs. [To the maskers.
But to the gentler men, who love at fight,
And never care to come to closer fight,
We have provided work for them to-night:
With safety they may draw their cannon down,
And into a surrender bomb the town.
From both side-boxes play their batteries ;
And not a bullet shot, but burning eyes :
Those they discharge with such successful arts,
They fire, three deep, into the ladies hearts.
Since each man here finds his diversion,
Let not the damning of our play be one.
But to the ladies, who must sit it out,
To bear us prate, and see the oglers shoot,
Begging their favour, we have this to say,
In hopes of their protection for the play,
Here is a music-meeting every day.]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

LOVEMORE,
WELLVILLE,
WILDING,
COURTALL,
SPRINGAME,
FRIENDALL,
RUFFLE,
Music-Master,

Mr. Betterton.
Mr. Kynaston.
Mr. Williams.
Mr. Bowman.
Mr. Mich. Lee.
Mr. Montford.
Mr. Bright.
Mr. Harris.

W O M E N.

Mrs. FRIENDALL,
Mrs. SIGHTLY,
Mrs. WITWOUD,
Mrs. TEAZALL,
FANNY, her Niece.
BETTY, WITWOUD's Maid.

Mrs. Barry.
Mrs. Bracegirdle.
Mrs. Montford.
Mrs. Cory.
Mrs. Richardson.

Two Pages, Footmen, and Linkboys.

S C E N E, *London.*

THE

WIVES EXCUSE;

G R,

CUCKOLDS MAKE THEMSELVES.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE *the outward Room to the Music-meeting.**Several Footmen at Hazard, some rising from Play.*

1. FOOTMAN.

APox on these music-meetings; there's no fifth act here, a free colt, as we have at the play-houses, to make gentlemen of us, and keep us out of harms-way: nothing but lice and linkboys in this anti-chamber; or a merry main to divert us; and that merry main, as you call it, makes most of us sad all the week after.

2 Foot. Why, what hast thou done, Gill?

1 Foot. Undone myself, and a very good friend of mine, my belly, for a week forward: I am hungry already in the apprehension of wanting a supper; for my board-wages is gone to the devil with his bones.

B 6.

3. Foot.

3 Foot. Six is the main, gentlemen.

4 Foot. That was my last tester. } Both rising from play-

5 Foot. I'll play no more— }

3 Foot. Set out my hand, don't leave me so, gentlemen.

6 Foot. Come, sir, seven to six, I set you—

3 Foot. Briskly, my boy.

6 Foot. I set you this.

3 Foot. How much?

6 Foot. Three halfperth of farthings.

3 Foot. Three halfperth of farthings! [Rises from play. I see thou retain'st the spirit of thy ancestors, and as thouwert born and bred, wilt live and die a footman— Three halfpenny-worth of farthings!

2 Foot. He sets like a small-beer butler in a widow lady's family.

3 Foot. May'st thou starve under the tyranny of a housekeeper, and never know the comfort of board-wages again.

6 Foot. Well, well, I have my money for all that.

1 Foot. Why, what a pretty fellow have we here debauch'd from us, and our society, by living in a civil family! but this comes of keeping good hours, and living orderly: idleness after supper, in your private houses, is the mother of many mischiefs among the maids.

3 Foot. Ay, ay; want of employment has thrown him upon some gentle chambermaid, and now he sets up for good husbandry, to father her failings, and get a wet-nurse for his lady.

6 Foot. Better so than to father your master's bastards, as you do sometimes; or now and then cheat him of his wench, in the convoy, and seal his clasp from him.

4 Foot. Gad I mercy i'faith, lad.

3 Foot. That indeed is a sin I often commit, and sometimes repent of: but, the good with the bad, I have no reason to complain of my service.

6 Foot. Pray don't trouble your head about mine then.

2 Foot. Come, come, we have all good places if we can keep 'em: and for my part, I am too deep in my master's

master's affairs, to fear the losing of mine: what think you of the family of the *Friendalls*, my lads? a public private-family, newly set up, and of very fair reception.

3 Foot. Ay, *Dick*; thou hast the time on't indeed.

2 Foot. The master of it frank and free, to make an invitation to the whole town; and the mistress hospitable and handsome, to give 'em welcome and content: for my master knows every body, and contrives that every body shall know her.

3 Foot. Ay, marry sir, there's a family to breed up a pimp in! you may make a fortune out of such a mistress, before your master can get her with child.

2 Foot. My master has been married not a quarter of a year, and half the young men in town know his wife already; nay, know that he has known enough of her, not to care for her already.

3 Foot. And that may be a very good argument for some of 'em, to persuade her to know a little of somebody else, and care as little for him.

4 Foot. A very good argument, if she takes it by the right handle.

2 Foot. Some of your masters, I warrant you, will put it into her hand.

3 Foot. I know my master has a design upon her.

2 Foot. And upon all the women in town.

4 Foot. Mine is in love with her.

5 Foot. And mine has hopes of her.

3 Foot. Every man has hopes of a new marry'd woman: for she marries to like her man; and if upon trial she finds she can't like her husband, she'll find somebody else that she can like, in a very little time, I warrant her, or change her men 'till she does.

2 Foot. Let her like as many as she pleases, and welcome: as they thrive with her, I shall thrive by them: I grind by her mill, and some of 'em I hope will set it a going. Besides, she has discover'd some of my master's intrigues of late, that may help to fill the sails; but I say nothing, I will take fees on both sides, and betray neither.

3 Foot.

14 *The Wives Excuse; or,*

3 Foot. If your lady loves play, as they say she does, she will be so far in your interest, that he that makes his court to her, must have money to recommend him—

2 Foot. To me he must indeed, if he expects my assistance.

5 Foot. Come, come, what do you think of my master, Mr. Lovemore, for the lady?

3 Foot. I don't think of him.

2 Foot. Not so much as she does, I believe you; he's a generous gentleman, and deserves very well of her, and me.

1 Foot. My master, Mr. Wellwile, is often at your house.

3 Foot. He follows Mrs. Sightly, I can tell you. But if your lady, Mrs. Friendall, has a mind to be very well-us'd; not to settle to't; but only by the way of a fashionable revenge, or so, to do herself justice upon her husband; I look upon Mr. Wilding, my master, one or other, to be the cleverest cuckold-maker in Covent-Garden.

2 Foot. Not to settle to't indeed, for your master is not over constant.

3 Foot. He does not stay in a family, to be challeng'd into Westminster-hall, by the husband's action of battery, for an assault upon his wife; he is not so constant.

4 Foot. Or if your lady be dispos'd to the more refin'd part of an amour, without the brutality or design of enjoyment, only for the pleasure of being talk'd of, or so forth—

3 Foot. Your master Courtall will fit her to a hair: for he will be as fond of the appearances of an intrigue, as she can be; to see him in the chase, you would think he had pleasure in the sport; for he will be as sure always to follow her, as never to press her; he will take as much pains to put her undeservedly into a lampoon, upon his account, as he would to avoid a handsome occasion, in private, to qualify her for the scandal.

2 Foot. In short, Mr. Courtall will do every thing, but what he ought to do, with a woman.

4 Foot.

4 Foot. He has broke off with three gentlewomen, upon my word, within these two months, for coming on too fast upon that busines.

2 Foot. Well, there are pretenders enough; so I have the profit, let my lady take the pleasure of the choice: I'm for the fairest bidder.

3 Foot. What, Harry, hast thou nothing to say of thy mistress, Mrs. Witwoud?

7 Foot. Nothing extraordinary, but that I'm tir'd of her.

3 Foot. She lives as she us'd to do, least at home; has no busines of her own, but a great deal of other people's. All the men in town follow her, but 'tis for other women; for she has frightened every one from a desighn upon her: then she's a general confidant, and sometimes reports no more than she knows; but that's a favour indeed, from a wit, as they say she is.

7 Foot. If she be a wit, I'll be sworn she does not take me for one; for she sends me very often upon very ridiculous errands.

3 Foot. I think you have a correspondent porter, in every quarter of the town, to disperse her scandalous letters, which she is always bantering one fool or other withal?

7 Foot. Four or five always in pay with her.

3 Foot. But when Horn-fair comes, that's sure to be a holiday, and every marry'd man that has a wife handsomer than she is, at her proper cost and charges, may expect a fairing, to put him in mind of his fortune.

7 Foot. I find you know her too well, to desire to live with her.

3 Foot. I had rather be a master of the ceremonies to a visiting lady, to 'squire about her how-d'y'e's, and usher in the formal salutations of all the fops in town, upon her day; nay, tho' she kept two days a week, than live in a family with her.

1 Foot. Will this damn'd musick-meeting never be done? would the cats-guts were in the fiddlers bellies.

Two

Two Pages meeting.

1 Page. My lady Smirkit's page.

2 Page. Who's there? my lady Woudmore!

1 Page. At your service, madam.

2 Page. O lord, madam! I am surpris'd to see your ladyship here—

2 Foot. What have we here?

3 Foot. The monkies apeing their ladies, let 'em go on.

2 Page. How can your ladyship descend into these little diversions of the town, the plays and the music-meetings?

1 Page. Little diversions indeed, madam, to us, who have seen so much better abroad, and still retain too much of the delicacy of the French, to be pleas'd with the barbarous performances of these English.

3 Foot. That's a touch for some of 'em.

1 Page. Yet there's no staying always at home, your ladyship knows—

2 Page. Nor being always seen in the drawing-room, I vow and swear—

1 Page. So that, madam, we are almost under a necessity of appearing in these public places—

2 Page. An absolute necessity of shewing ourselves sometimes.

1 Page. Ay, but, madam, then the men, they do so egle one—

3 Foot. Ah! very well, Mr. Charles.

1 Page. Into all the little confusions that a woman is liable to upon those occasions.

2 Page. I swear my lord Simperwell has an irresistible way with him.

1 Page. He ogled me all the music long, I believe every body took notice of it, so furiously, I could not bear it myself; I vow and swear, he almost made me blush; and I would rather do any thing to deserve blushing, in another place, than by a country modesty betray such an unpardonable want of breeding, to the censure of so much good company.

3 Foot. I dare swear for her ladyship, she had rather do it than blush for't.

1 Page.

CUCKOLDS MAKE THEMSELVES. 17

1 *Page.* Why how now, Jack Sauce ? [To the footman.
But did I blush, madam ? [To the page.

2 *Page.* Only for your friends, madam, to see us so neglected.

1 *Page.* Fie, fie, madam, you made your conquest too. I minded no body but my lord ; and I vow and swear, I must own it, madam, he ogles one more like a man of quality, than any body about town that I know of, and I think I am pretty well acquainted with all the soft looks in town.

2 *Page.* One after another we have 'em all——but Je-su ! madam——

1 *Page.* Ay, madam.

2 *Page.* They say the French fleet will be here next summer, with their *Tourvilles*, and their things, and Je-su ! madam, ravish us all.

1 *Page.* O lord, madam, ravishing us is nothing, but our dear religion, madam, what will they do to that ?

2 *Page.* Ay, what indeed, madam ?

1 *Page.* I would not lose the gaping galleries of our churches, for the best religion in christendom.

3 *Foot.* You are precious pages indeed, betray your ladies secrets, before you come into 'em.

Witbiz. Make way for my lord there, bear back gentlemen.

1 *Foot.* So, so, 'tis done at last, let's get the coaches to the door. [Exeunt omnes.

The curtain drawn up, shews the company at the music-meeting ; after an Italian song, Lovemore, Wellville, Wilding, Courtall, Springame, Friendall, Ruffle, Mrs. Friendall, Sightly, Witwoud, Fanny advance to the front of the stage.

Mr. Fri. Ladies and gentlemen, how do you like the music ?

Sight. O very fine sure, fir.

Wit. What say you to't, young gentlemen ?

Spring. I have something to say to you, I like a great deal better, provided you won't laugh at me.

[Going aside with her.
But

But the music's extremely fine—— [To the company.

Well. Especially the vocal part. For I did not understand a word on't.

Mr. Fri. Nor I, faith, *Wellville*, but the words were *Italian*, they sung well, and that's enough for the pleasure of the ear.

Court. By which I find your sense is found.

Mr. Fri. And found sense is a very good thing, *Court*, all—— [Goes to Wild-

Well. That thou wo't never be the better for.

Mr. Fri. *Wilding*, thou hast been so busy about that young girl there, thou know'st nothing of the matter.

Wild. O, sir, you're mistaken, I am a great admirer——

Mr. Fri. Of every thing in petticoats.

Wild. Of these musical entertainments; I am very musical, and love any call that brings the women together.

Mr. Fri. Vocal, or instrumental! which do you most approve of? If you are for the instrumental, there were the sonatas to night, and the chacons, which you know——

Wild. The sonatas and the chacons which I know! not I, sir, I don't know 'em: they may be two *Italian* fiddlers of your acquaintance, for any thing I know of 'em.

Mr. Fri. Fie, fie, fiddlers' masters, if you please, *Wilding*; masters, excellent in their art, and famous for many admirable compositions. [Mingles with the company.

Court. So, he's fast in his own snare, with his sonatas and chacons: but how goes the world, *Wilding*?

Wild. The same women every day, and in every public appearance.

Court. Here are some faces, I see, of your acquaintance.

Wild. Ay, pox take 'em, I see 'em too often to forget 'em: would their owners thought as ill of 'em as I do, they would keep 'em at home; but they are for shewing their show still, tho' no body cares for the sight.

[They mix with the company.

Wild.

Wit. Methinks 'tis but good manners in Mr. Lovemore, to be particular to your sister, when her husband is so universal to the company.

Spring. Prithee leave her to her husband : she has satisfied her relations enough in marrying this coxcomb ; now let her satisfy herself, if she pleases, with any body she likes better.

Wit. Fie, fie, there's no talking to you, you carry my meaning further than I design'd.

Spring. Faith I took it up but where you left it, very near the matter.

Wit. No, no, you grow scandalous ; and I would not be thought to say a scandalous thing of a friend.

Spring. Since my brother in law is to be a cuckold, as it must be mightily my sister's fault if he be not, I think Lovemore as proper a fellow to carry on so charitable a work, as she could ha' lit upon : and if he has her consent to the busines, she has mine, I assure you.

Wit. A very reasonable brother !

Spring. Would you be as reasonable a friend, and allow me as many liberties as I do her ?

Wit. Why, so I will : she has the men, and you shall have the women, the whole sex to pick and chuse —

Spring. One mistress out of —

Wit. As many as you please, and as often as you have occasion.

Spring. Why, faith, that pleases me very well ; you hit my constitution, as if you were familiar with it, or had a mind to be so.

Wit. Not I indeed, sir.

Spring. And I have, as you were saying —

Wit. As I was saying !

Spring. Very often an occasion for a mistress.

Wit. You say so yourself, I know nothing of your occasions.

Spring. Shall I bring you acquainted with some of 'em ? I have great variety, and have, every day, a new occasion for a new mistress : if you have a mind to be satisfied in this point, let me go along with you —

Wit.

Wit. Home with me?

Spring. Or home with me, will do my business as well.

Wit. But it won't do mine, sir.

Spring. Then let it be home with you, tho' my lodging is very convenient.

Wit. Why, this is sudden indeed, upon so small an acquaintance: but 'tis something too soon for you, and a little too late for me.

Spring. Not to repent, I hope, madam? better late than never, you know: come, come, I have known a worse offer better receiv'd.

Wit. And this offer you will make to every woman, 'till it be receiv'd, I dare answer for you.

Spring. That's more than you can do for yourself for refusing it. But the folly fall upon your own head: I have done my part, and 'tis your fault if you're idle—

[*Goes away.*]

Sigbt. You have been entertain'd, cousin—

[*Slightly to her.*]

Wit. By a very pretty prating fellow, cousin; and I could be contented to let him show his parts this way, as often as he pleas'd.

Sigbt. What! like a man of honour? he's for making good what he says—

Wit. And comes so quick upon that business, he won't afford a woman a reasonable liking-time, to make a decent excuse to herself, if she shou'd allow him a favour.

Sigbt. The young officer has heard enough of your character, I suppose, not to put it too much into your power of laughing at him.

Wit. I'm sorry for't: I would have a man know just enough of me to make him a lover: and then, in a hittle time, I should know enough of him to make him an ass.

Sigbt. This will come home to you one day.

Wit. In any shape but a husband, cousin. But methinks Lovemore and Mrs. Friendall are very seriously engag'd—

[*Observing Lovemore with Mrs. Friendall.*]

Sigbt. I have had an eye upon 'em.

With

CUCKOLDS MAKE THEMSELVES. 21

Wit. For such a trifle as cuckolding a husband is in this town.

Sight. The men will always design upon our sex; but I dare answer for her—

Wit. And so will I. That if she should fall from the frailty of the flesh into that folly, she will appear no monster, whatever her husband may be. What say you to a ramble after the music?

Sight. I say nothing to't.

Wit. A hackney jaunt, from one end of the town to t'other?

Sight. 'Tis too late.

Wit. I know two several companies gone into the city, one to *Pontacks*, and t'other to the *Rummer*, to supper: I want to disturb, strangely; what say you, cuz? lets put on our masques, draw up the glasses, and send up for the men, to make their women uneasy: there's one of 'em to be marry'd, it may do good upon her, by shewing what she must trust to, if she will have a husband.

Sight. And can you be so mischievous?

Wit. Can you resist the temptation?

Sight. I came with Mrs. *Friendall*, and must go home with her. Look to your charge there.

Wit. I have an eye that way.

Sight. We shall see you to-morrow, cousin?

Wit. At your toilet, cousin; you are always my first visit. [Goes to Wilding and Fanny.

Mrs. Fri. Is this your friendship to Mr. *Friendall*? I must not hear it.

Love. You see he gives you leave.

Mrs. Fri. Therefore I can't take it; the confidence is so generous, that ev'n that would secure me to him.

Love. The confidence is as generous on your side; and do you think that will secure him to you?

Mrs. Fri. I'll ask him, if you please.

Love. You'll but disturb him.

Mrs. Fri. Mr. *Friendall*.

[Calling him.]

Mr. Fri. Ha! what's the matter, madam?

Mrs. Fri. There has happen'd here a scurvy dispute between me and one of your friends, sir, as you think fit to call 'em.

Mrs.

Mr. Fri. A dispute ! about what, pr'ythee ? but before I hear a word on't, *Lovemore*, thou art certainly in the wrong in holding an argument with a woman.

Love. I begin to think so too, sir, for contending with a lady that will be try'd by no body but her husband.

Mr. Fri. But what's the busines ? nothing extraordinary between you, I hope ?

Mrs. Fri. Believe me, sir, I think it very extraordinary—

Love. Very extraordinary indeed, madam, to be so publicly expos'd for a private opinion.

Mrs. Fri. And you shall be the judge of the difference.

Mr. Fri. No, no, no difference among friends, it must not come to that, I'll make up all differences between you.

Love. You may do much indeed to set all straight.

Mr. Fri. And so I will, i'faith *Lovemore*, I'll reconcile all I'll warrant you ; but come, what is this mighty matter between you ?

Mrs. Fri. I think it a mighty matter, Mr. *Friendall*, to be so far suspected in my conduct, that any one, under the title of your friend, should dare, in your absence, to be so very familiar with me—

Mr. Fri. How, madam !

Love. All will out, I see,

[*Afside.*]

Mr. Fri. In my absence, so very familiar with you.

Mrs. Fri. As to censure these innocent liberties that the women allow themselves in the company of their husbands.

Love. So, she has sav'd her credit with me, and mine with her husband.

[*Mrs. Friendall joins Mrs. Witwoud.*]

Mr. Fri. Why, *Lovemore*, thou art in the wrong of all this ; I desired you to sport off a little gallantry with my wife, to entertain and divert her from making her observations upon me, and thou dost nothing but play the critic upon her.

Love. I find I was mistaken. But how wou'd you have me behave myself ?

Mr.

Mr. Fri. Why, I wou'd have you very frequent in your visits, and very obliging to my wife, now and then, to carry on our other pleasures the better: for the amusement, or so, you may say a civil thing to her, for every woman, you know, loves to have a civil thing said to her sometimes; but then you must be very cautious in the expression; if she shou'd in the least apprehend that you had a design upon her, 'twou'd raise the devil in one part of the family, and lay him in another, perhaps, where I had a mind to employ him: therefore I wou'd have you keep in favour with her—

Love. I'll do my best, I promise you.

Mr. Fri. She's inclining, you must know, to speak very well of you; and that she does of very few of the men, I assure you: she approves of the intimacy and friendship between us, and of your coming to the house; and that may stand you in stead with the lady, you wot of—

Love. I apprehend you—so begging the lady's pardon [*To Mrs. Friendall.*] with a design of doing something to deserve it—

Wit. That will never fail with the women, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I will make an interest with the masters, to give you a song at parting. [Goes to the masters.]

Sight. An English song, good Mr. Lovemore.

Mr. Fri. O by all means an English song.

[Goes to the masters too.]

Wit. Any song, which won't oblige a man to tell you he has seen an opera at *Venice* to understand.

Mr. Fri. Pray, let him sing the ladies the song I gave him.

Music-master. Which song, sir?

Mr. Fri. The last.

Music-master. 'Tis not set, sir!

Mr. Fri. Not set, sir! [Turning from him, to the ladies.]

Love. That's a fault he'll never forgive you.

Music-master. Why, really, sir, I would serve any gentleman to my power; but the words are so abominably out of the way of music, I don't know how to humour 'em:

24 *The Wives Excuse; or,*

'em: there's no setting 'em, or singing 'em, to please any body but himself.

Sight. O! but we lose by this.

Mr. Fri. Hang 'em, idle rascals; they care not what entertainment we lose, so they have but our money.

Sight. Is it your own song, Mr. Friendall?

Mr. Fri. I must not rob your ladyship of your part in it.

Sight. My part in your song, sir!

Mr. Fri. You were the muse that inspir'd me; I writ it upon your ladyship.

Sight. Fie, fie; that pride wou'd ruin me: but I know you say so to every woman. [She turns from him.

Mr. Fri. I'gad, she's i'th' right on't; I have told a dozen so already at the music-meeting, and most of 'em believe me.

Sight. Does Mr. Friendall often write songs, madam?

Mrs. Fri. He does many things he shou'd not do, madam; but I think he loves me, and that excuses him to me: tho' you may be sure, 'tis with the tenderest concern for my own reputation, that I see my husband daily trifle away his so notoriously, in one folly or other of the town.

[Goes to Mr. Friendall.

Wit. For her own reputation, it must be; for the world will believe, she turns such a husband to the right use, whatever she says to the contrary.

Mrs. Fri. Mr. Friendall, pray be satisfied with a good estate; and not imagine, because you have that, you have every thing else. The busines of writing songs should be over with a married man. And since I can't be suspected to be the *Pbillis*, or *Cleris*, 'tis an affront to me, to have any other woman thought so.

Mr. Fri. Indeed, madam, so far you are right: I never heard of any man, that writ a song upon his wife.

S O N G

S O N G, by Major-general Sackville.

*I*ngrateful love! thus, every hour,
To punish me by her disdain!
You tyrannize to shew your pow'r's,
And sue, to triumph in my pain.

You who can laugh at human woes,
And victims to her pride decree,
On me, your yielding slave, impose
Your chains; but leave the rebel free.

How fatal are your poison'd darts!
Her conqu'ring eyes the trophies boast,
Whilst you insnare poor wand'ring hearts,
That in her charms and scorn are lost.

Impious, and cruel: you deny
A death, to ease me of my care:
Which she delays, to make me try
The force of beauty and despair.

Mr. Fri. Lovemore, we may thank you for this: but when you keep your promise to me at dinner, to-morrow, and you, and you, and all of you, gentlemen, [Speaks to all the men.] I'll do you reason to the good company. Some of my servants there—

[Goes to the door.

Court. Madam, I am very luckily here to offer you my service.

Mrs. Fri. No particular woman must expect it from so general a follower of the sex, as *Mr. Courtall* is.

Court. A general follower of the sex indeed, madam, in my care of 'em.

Mrs. Fri. Besides, 'tis dangerous to be seen with a man of your character; for if you don't make it an intrigue, the town makes it for you: and that does most of your business as well.

Court. There's no knowing a man by his character in this town; the partiality of friends, and the prejudice

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of

26 *The Wives Excuse; or,*
of enemies, who divide it, always makes him better or
worse than he deserves.

Mrs. Fri. If you have no regard to my reputation,
pray be tender of your own. 'Tis now-a-days as scandalous
in a man, who wou'd be thought to know the
town (as I know you wou'd) to wait upon a bare face
to her coach, as it us'd to be to lead out a vizard-mask :
but the pit has got the better of the boxes, with most of
you, in that point of civility ; and I don't doubt, but it
turns to better account.

Spring. Indeed, sister, it does turn to better account ;
and therefore we must provide for ourselves —

[*Takes Courtall with him to Mrs. Witwoud.*
Why, here's a woman, *Courtall* — If she has a vizard-
mask to encourage me — [Love. goes to *Mrs. Fri.*
I cou'd go to the world's end with her : but as she is,
bare-faced, and an honest woman —

Wit. You'll do a foolish thing, for once ; see her to
her coach, I dare say for you, to make her otherwife.

Spring. Why, if it must be so — [Addressing to her.

Wild. You own your aunt is a-bed ; and you see *Mrs. Witwoud*'s too busy to mind your going away with me.

Fan. I can't to night, but I'll call upon you to-mor-
row morning, as I go to six o'clock prayers.

Love. I hope, madam, I may without exception wait
upon you. [To *Mrs. Friendall*.

Welv. And, madam, I have the title of an old servant
to your ladyship, to expect that favour from you —

[To *Mrs. Sightly*.

Sight. Mr. *Friendall*, having a handsome wife in the
company, may be jealous ; and you will pardon me if I
am unwilling to give him a suspicion of a man, whom I
would have every body think as well of, as I do myself.

Mrs. Fri. Mr. *Friendall* gives you more opportunities
than I can approve of, and I cou'd wish you wou'd not
take the advantage of 'em ; they'll turn to no account.

Mr. Fri. Come ladies, I am your man I find —

[Leads *Mrs. Sightly*, *Mrs. Friendall* following.

Ruf. What think you of this occasion ?

Love.

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Love. You can't have a better; follow him—And be famous—[Springame leads Witwoud. Wilding leads.

Fanny out. Ruffle after the Company.

Wellv. What have you now in hand?

Love. Why all my hopes of the wife depending upon the senseless behaviour of the husband; I have contriv'd, by this fellow, before her face too, to expose him, a way that must ruin him with her for ever; let's follow, and expect the event—

[Exeunt.

S C E N E changes to the street.

Several link-boys, and footmen.

Link. Have a light, gentlemen, have a light, Sir.
[Springame with Witwoud.

Spring. Light yourselves to the devil.

[Wilding with Fanny, and several others.

2 *Link.* Bless you, master, we can find the way in the dark. Shall I light your worship there?

Spring. Then call a coach, and thy wit shall be thy reward.

5 *Foot.* Mr. Friendall's coach there—'Tis at the door, sir.

Enter Mr. Friendall leading Mrs. Sightly with his wife;
Ruffle enters after 'em. Lovemore and Wellvile in the rear.

Mr. Fri. I must improve every opportunity with your ladyship, to convince you of the truth I have been telling you to night, and in this billet, I give it under my hand how very much I am your servant—

[Sightly throws it behind her.

Sight. Fie, fie, before your wife— [Ruffle takes it up.

Mrs. Fri. Sir, that paper does not belong to you.

[Friendall leads Mrs. Sightly off, and returns for his wife.

Ruf. Don't be jealous, lady, I know no design the gentlewoman has as yet upon my person, and I'll belong to you, if this gentleman pleases.

Mr. Fri. You're pleas'd to be merry, sir, but no touching her, I beseech you.

Mrs. Fri. What wou'd the fellow have?

C 2

Ruf.

28 *The Wives Excuse; or,*

Ruf. Why, I wou'd have this fellow gone about his business.

Mr. Fri. My business lies here at present, sir.

Ruf. You lie there, sir.

[*Hits Mr. Friendall a box on the ear, and draws; the woman shriek, Mrs. Friendall pretends to hold her husband, the company come about 'em.*]

Mrs. Fri. Good Mr. Friendall, another time, consider where you are. You are more a man of honour, I know, than to draw your sword among the women; I am sorry this has happen'd in a place where you can't right yourself, without wronging the company. But you'll find a time to do a justice to yourself, and the ladies, who have suffer'd in the apprehension of such a brutality.

Spring. I'll go along with you —

[*All go off but Witwoud.*]

Wit. Won'd the devil had 'em, for drawing their swords here; I have lost my little captain in the fray: my charge is departed too, and for this night I suppose has left me to make an excuse to the family, for her lying abroad with a country cousin, or so; that rogue *Wilding* has carry'd her home with him, and 'tis as well now, as a week hence, for when these young wenches once set their hearts upon't, every thing gives them an opportunity to ruin themselves: her aunt *Teazall* has made her rise to fix-o'clock prayers to fine purpose, if this be the fruits of her devotion: but since she must fall to some body, I'm glad *Wilding* has her, for he'll use her ill enough in a little time, to make her wiser for the future; by the dear experience and vexation of this intrigue, (being disappointed of many things she expects) she may make a virtue of necessity, repent because she can't keep him to herself, and make an honest man a very good wife yet.

[*Exit.*]

Lovemore, Wellvile, Ruffle return.

Ruf. I have done my part, and am satisfied with the honour of the achievement.

Love. 'Tis a reputation clear gain'd; since there's no danger of accounting for't.

Ruf.

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Ruf. So thanking you, for this occasion of shewing myself, I am your humble servant— [Exit.

Wolv. Who is this hero, pray?

Love. Why this is a spark, that has had the misfortune of being kick'd very lately, and I have help'd him to this occasion of repairing his honour, upoa our very good friend; a greater coward than himself: he has serv'd my ends, now let him serve the town's.

Wolv. But did you observe how the lady behaved herself in the quarrel, to conceal her husband's cowardice?

Love. What a handsome excuse she made in his favour, to the company! when she can never make any for him to herself.

Wolv. This matter well manag'd, may turn to account; tho' you must not be seen to expose him, you may take the advantage of his exposing himself.

Love. And let her say what she can upon this subject, I believe no woman can be contented to have her honour much longer than her fortune in the possession of a man, who has no fund of his own, to answer in security for either.

Thus, who a married woman's love would win,
Should with the husband's failings first begin;
Make him but in the fault, and you shall find
A good excuse will make most women kind. [Exeunt]

A C T II. S C E N E I.

Witwend at a table, with Betty, and a footman waiting.

Wit. **N**O news of my cousin Fanny this morning?
Bet. For God's sake, madam, not a word of her lying out to-night; we shall have the devil to do with the odd gentleman, if she knows it.

C 3.

Wit.

Wit. That's a secret I can keep from her, for my own sake, *Betty*: but how comes this about? I'm quite out of gilt paper: *Harry*, you fetch me two or three quire from Mr. *Binley's*, and call at Mrs. *Da Robe's*, my mantua-woman's, as you come back, for letters——and, d'you hear? Give this note to *Joe* the porter, he needs no instructions; let him leave it for Mr. *Wilding*——
 [footman and maid go out.] I find I must meddle in this business; for her visits at this rate, will not only be troublesome to him (as I would have 'em) but in a little time, be public to the whole town: now, tho' I am very well pleased with any matter of scandal, I am so nearly related to the interest of this girl, I would not have her the occasion of it. They say the understanding ought to be suited to the condition, to make any one happy: would she were in a condition suitable to her understanding; she has wit enough for a wife, and nothing else that I know of.

Teazall enters to her.

Teaz. O, madam! you're welcome home.

Wit. Rather good-morrow, cousin.

Teaz. Rather good-morrow indeed, that's the properer salutation: for you're never to be seen in your lodging at any other time of the day; and then too, as soon as you're out a-bed in a morning, you summon a congregation of your fellows together, to hear you prate by the hour, flatter every body in the company, speak ill of every one that's absent, and scatter about the scandal of that day.

Wit. Why, madam, you won't quarrel at that, I hope; 'tis one of the most fashionable innocent diversions of the town, it makes a great deal of mirth, speaking ill of people, and never does any body any harm.

Teaz. Not with any that know you, I believe. How came you home last night? The night before, you arriv'd like a carted bawd, justly punish'd for the sins of the people. You confess'd you were forc'd to bilk your coach, to get rid of the coxcombs that dogg'd you from the play-house, and being pursu'd by the coachman and footmen,

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footmen, (for I don't doubt but you gave the gentlemen encouragement enough to come home with you) you look'd as if you belong'd to a cellar, in some of the alleys you were hunted through, and had been caterwawling in all the kennels of the town.

Wit. That was an unfortunate night indeed.

Teaz. Well, deliver every good woman's child, I say, from such dabble-tail'd courses as these are; what will be the end of 'em, I beseech you? You will make yourself as odious in a little time, as you endeavour to make every body else: this is not the way to get a husband; the men know too much of you already, to desire any more of you.

Wit. I don't set up for a husband.

Teaz. Marry come up here! you may have an occasion for an husband, when you can't get one. Husbands are not always to be had at a month's warning, to finish another man's work: what, 'tis beneath the character of a she wit, I suppose, to be constant: or is a husband out of fashion with you, forsooth? another woman's husband can go down with you to my knowledge, and as ugly a rogue too, with as hanging a countenance, as I cou'd wish (any villain I had a mind to be rid of)—your diversion, as you call him.

Wit. O spare my shame, I own he is my curse, doom'd for my plague and pleasure.

Teaz. Spare your shame! I'll say that for you, you have not been sparing of any endeavour that cou'd bring a shame any way into the family, wherever you liv'd yet; if there was ever a fool soft enough to throw it upon. All your relations know you, and are afraid to have you in a house with 'em; and I suppose you are very well pleas'd to be from under their roof; to have your fellows come after you to my house as they do; and as I am fool enough to allow of.

Wit. For no harm, cousin, I hope.

Teaz. Perhaps you think it no harm; and, indeed, it can't easily do you any harm: but, I'm sure, I have one of my nieces already undone, by your bringing her acquainted with some of 'em. I was forc'd to marry her,

you know, below her rank (for the usual reason of this end of the town) into the city, where 'twas less scandalous, the wives there having a charter for what they do. And now *Fanny*, a very girl, when I have provided a husband, and all, for her, (for she must have a husband,) she takes after her sister; (as a little thing will make a precedent for what we are inclin'd to;) she takes after her sister, I say, and is unfortunately engaged in a passion for Mr. *Wilding*: and how to prevent it—

Wit. Indeed, I must acknowledge, I was, in a great measure, the unfortunate cause of my cousin *Biddy's* mis-carriage; but for my cousin *Fanny*, rely upon me; nothing shall come on't; I am now going to Mr. *Wilding*, on that account; and have sent a note to secure him at his lodgings 'till I come.

Easter Betty.

Teaz. Well, where's this girl? Why does not she come, when I send for her?

Betty. Madam, she went to six-o'clock prayers, and is not come back yet.

Teaz. God's bodikins! has she got the trick on't? of abusing the church into the place of assignation already? *Wilding* has carry'd her home with him that's certain: get you gone after her; may be you may prevent his wicked design on her. Go, go, and redeem her, tho' you leave yourself in her room.

Wit. I'm oblig'd to you, truly, madam.

Teaz. I dare venture you, you'll not be in love with him; you'll give him as good as he brings; and, let the worst come to the worst, you have liv'd too long in the town, to be uneasy for any man; or be concern'd beyond the pleasure and convenience of the intrigue. Therefore I may venture you, a little time goes a great way in this business; deliver her, and I won't find fault with you, these three days, you shall do what you please— [Exe.

SCENE

S C E N E Mr. Friendall's house.

Mrs. Friendall following Mr. Friendall.

Mrs. Fri. Nay, Mr. Friendall, I know what you will object to me; but you must hear me out. The concern and care of your reputation is as dear to me, as it can be tender to you; since I must appear to the world, only in that rank of honour which you are pleas'd to maintain.

Mr. Fri. Why, madam, you have as handsome an equipage as any man's wife in town, that has a father alive.

Mrs. Fri. This must not put me off. I see you make little of the matter, to hide it from my fears; and there indeed you're kind; but 'tis in vain to think of concealing from me what you intend; from what you ought to do, I know what you will do, after so base a wrong.

Mr. Fri. A drucken extravagance, the fellow will be sorry for't, when he's sober—

Mrs. Fri. If you woud stay 'till then—

Mr. Fri. And beg my pardon.

Mrs. Fri. That he shall do, if that won'd satisfy you.

Mr. Fri. Satisfy me!

Mrs. Fri. And let it satisfy you; it ought to satisfy you from such a one. For, I believe he wou'd not have quarrell'd any where else, nor there neither, but upon the prospect of being prevented, or parted, or secur'd over night, in order to beg pardon in the morning.

Mr. Fri. Ay, madam, but consider—

Mrs. Fri. Pray consider me, Mr. Friendall, I must suffer every way, if you proceed to a revenge; in your danger which must be mine; in my honour, which ought to be more yours than to expose it upon every little occasion.—Come, come, in other things you have a good opinion of my conduct, pray let me govern here; you may be assur'd, I'll do nothing to lessen you; the satisfaction shall be as public as the affront. Leave it to me for once, I will not be deny'd.—He is not worth your danger.

Mr. Fri. Well, you shall govern me.

Mrs. Fri. What, you are a marry'd man, and have a good estate settled upon you; and shou'd not be accountable to every idle rake-hell, that has a mind to establish a renown, from being troublesome to public places.

Mr. Fri. What then wou'd you propose?

Mrs. Fri. A small request; not to stir abroad, nor be at home to any-body, 'till you hear from me.

Mr. Fri. I promise you I won't— [Exit.]

Mrs. Fri. I dare take your word: his tameness last night, and backwardness this morning, in resenting that blow, satisfy me that he is not in a fever for fighting: I don't know that he is a coward; but having these reasons to suspect him, I thought this was my best way to hinder him from discovering himself: for if he had betray'd that baseness to me, I shou'd despise him; and can I love the man I must despise? brother, I sent for you— [Spring comes to her.]

Spring. To make up this quarrel I know, and I come to lend a helping hand to the work, I design to be a second in the busines.

Mrs. Fri. You must be my second then, for I have taken the quarrel upon me.

Spring. With all my heart, I 'gad; we, who live all the summer for the public, shou'd live in the winter for ourselves—

Mrs. Fri. And the women, good captain—

Spring. That's living for ourselves, for 'tis not living without 'em: and a duel now might but interrupt a month of other busines perhaps, that would be more agreeable to my constitution, I assure you: then we are to have no fighting it seems?

Mrs. Fri. For reasons I'll tell you hereafter.

Spring. Nay there was no great danger of it; I have found out the gentlemen's lodgings, and character. We shall strike up a peace before a bottle to an end.

Mrs. Fri. This challenge must be delivered as from him: I trust the management to you: only take this in advice, that Mr. Friesdall wants your assistance within; you must stand by him, and oblige the gentleman to make him satisfaction, without bringing his person in danger.

Spring.

Spring. I understand you, and he shall satisfy him, or me.
Mrs. Fri. See him satisfy'd; and I'll satisfy you with something shall be better to a younger brother than the false masters of a winter's quarter.

Spring. I warrant you.

Mrs. Fri. Whatever I think of him, I must not let him fall into the contempt of the town: every little fellow, I know, will be censoriously inquisitive, and maliciously witty, upon another man's cowardice, out of the pleasure of finding as great a rascal as himself. How despicable a condition must that matrimony be, when the husband (whom we look upon as a sanctuary for a woman's honour) must be oblig'd to the discretion and management of a wife, for the security of his own! have a care of thinking that way; for in a marry'd state, as in the public, we tie ourselves up, indeed; but to be protected in our persons, fortunes, and honours, by those very laws that restrain us, in other things; for few will obey, but for the benefit they receive from the government.—

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, Mr. Lovemore—

[*Goes out.*

Mrs. Fri. Lovemore here! I know he comes to tempt me to rebel; but I'm prepar'd for him.—Good morrow Mr. Lovemore.

Enter Lovemore.

Lov. I cou'd not expect to see your ladyship so early: I come to Mr. Friendall.

Mrs. Fri. May I thank you for the visit?

Lov. I come as a friend, you may be sure, madam: where your honour's concern'd, I can't be an enemy.

Mrs. Fri. Not reasonably, indeed; to any man that wou'd injure it, since you are a profess'd enemy.

Lov. An enemy!

Mrs. Fri. Unless you will allow no body to ruin it, but yourself.

Lov. Indeed, I wou'd allow no body to defend it: but myself, if I had the keeping of it; but a happier-

man has that title, and I can only hope to be a second
in your service.

Mrs. Fri. I thank you for the service you design me; but that happier man, as you call him, who has the title, will maintain it, it seems; for he, and my brother Syringame, I'm afraid, are gone about it already.

Lov. Gone, madam?

Mrs. Fri. An hour ago, before I had notice to prevent 'em: for Mr. Friendall, you may be sure, was impatient for an occasion of righting himself.

Lov. I might have thought so, indeed, madam: would I had come sooner.

Mrs. Fri. You may yet be serviceable to me, sir, tho' you are too late for Mr. Friendall.

Lov. How, madam, I beseech you?

Mrs. Fri. By endeavouring to prevent 'em: you are acquainted with the ways of reconciling matters of this honourable nature. I am going to make an interest with a kinsman, a colonel of the guards, myself, to secure 'em. Let your good nature in this be a proof of your friendship; and command me to my power—

[Exit.]

Lov. Prevent 'em! yes, yes: that I must do for my own sake; for if he should behave himself better than I imagin'd he would, it may secure him in his wife's esteem, and only ruin me with her, who laid the design.

[Exit.]

S C E N E Wilding's lodgings:

Enter Wilding, and his man.

Wild. Have you dispos'd of her?

Serv. Safe into a chair, sir: she's jogging homeward lighter by a maidenhead, I presume, than she came, sir.

Wild. The loss is not so light; but she may feel it.

Serv. Heavy enough, perhaps, nine months hence, sir. But have you sent ever a lie along with her?

Wild. How, sirrah?

Serv.

Serv. Pardon me, sir : not that I believe your honour was sparing of your conscience, in saying any thing, and swearing to't, that she had a mind to believe.

Wild. That you may swear, indeed.

Serv. But she's gone away so very well satisfy'd with what you have said and done to her, she's above inventing a lie for herself: the first angry word they give her at home, I suppose, you may hear of her ; a huckney-coach removes her, and her commodes, upon very little warning ; and I expect when she will send in half-a-dozen band-boxes, to take possession of your lodgings. But, pray, sir, if I may be so bold —

Wild. Yes, yes ; at this time you may be so bold : the service of your wit secures you the privilege of your jest.

Serv. Then, pray sir, why did you take so much pains to persuade this young creature to come away from her aunt, when I know you never design to take care of her yourself ?

Wild. Why, 'faith, I can't make you a very good answer : but the best reason I know of, is, (besides the reputation of undoing her) it looks kind, at the time, to talk of providing for the woman that does one the favour. 'Twas a very plausible argument, to cozen her into a consent ; level to my design of lying with her, and carry'd to the very mark of love.

Serv. Indeed it costs nothing to promise, when nothing can oblige you to pay : and if she depends upon it, at her peril ; 'tis she will be disappointed, not you ; tho' ten to one, poor little rogue, from the fondness of her own inclinations, she guesses at yours : and fancies, from the courtesy she has done you, you will be so civil a gentleman, to marry her.

Wild. Not unlikely ; there's none of these young girls, (let a man's character be never so loose among 'em,) but, from one vanity or other, will be encourag'd to design and venture upon him : and tho' fifty of their acquaintance have fall'n in the experiment, each of them will still imagine she has something particular in her person, forsooth, to reclaim and engage him to herself. So

most

most of 'em miscarry upon the project of getting husbands.

Serv. Gad forgive me for swearing; but, as I hope to be sav'd, and that's a bold word for a footman, I beg your pardon; there's a lady below, in a vizard, to speak with you. [Exit.]

Wild. Get you gone, you rascal; beg her pardon, and leave to wait upon her; she would have been admitted, in less time, to a privy-counsellor's levée, though he had laid aside the busines of the nation to manage her's. This must be the letter-lady: she comes a little unseasonable, if she knew all: if she has experience enough to allow for some natural miscarriages, which may happen in the beginning of an amour, I may pacify her that way: 'tis but swearing heartily, damning the modesty of my constitution, laying its faults upon an over-respect to her, and promising better things for the future: that us'd to be a current excuse; but 'tis the women's fault if it pass too often upon 'em—If she prove an old acquaintance, the coldness of the entertainment will secure me from the persecution of her visits hereafter: but if it be a face I never saw, I may use her well enough yet, to encourage her to another appointment. So every way does my business, whatever becomes of the ladies— [Witwoud enters mask'd.] O, madam, I beg your pardon—

Wit. No excuses, good sir; men of employment are above good breeding; and I see you have a great deal upon your hands.

Wild. I am a man of busines, indeed, madam; and, as you were pleas'd to signify in your letter, my practice lies among the women: what can I do for you?

Wit. Can't you tell what, sir? You are not the man I took you for: but you are like our fortune-tellers, who come into our secrets more by our own folly, in betraying ourselves, than by any skill or knowledge of their own.

Wild. Indeed I should ha' proceeded, as most of those fellows do, set out impudently at first, taken several things for granted (as that you were no maid, and so forth).

forth) ventur'd briskly at every thing, and something might have happen'd to please you.

Wit. Did the lady, just gone away from you, find it so?

Wild. She had what she came for: you would take it ill to lose your labour yourself, madam.

Wit. She ventur'd at every thing, as briskly as you could, I suppose, sir?

Wild. 'Tis a cowardly girl indeed, and comes on finely; I have no reason to complain of losing my labour upon her: she's ready for running away from her relations already. Are you not a little that way inclin'd? Come, come, if you have any troubles upon your spirits, child—

Wit. You can remove 'em into the flesh, I warrant you.

Wild. If you have ever a husband, that lies heavy upon your conscience, I have a cordial will drive the distemper from your heart.

Wit. Why that's kind indeed, to make some room for the lover: but this is not my distemper: I could resolve it myself, if I had a husband, whither I would make him a cuckold, or no: but I lye under a difficulty of disposang of a maidenhead.

Wild. There I must resolve you, that case I often handle.

Wit. But hear it, I beseech you, before you decide it.

Wild. That would do well in *Westminster-ball*, I grant you, but in proceedings of this nature, we are always on the plaintiff's side: let the sober party say what they can to the reason of the thing: you are certainly in the right, in pleasing yourself.

Wit. 'Twill come to that, I believe: for you must know, sir, that being under the discretion and tyranny of an old aunt—

Wild. You will naturally run away from her.

Wit. And being considerable enough, to be followed for my fortune—

Wild. You will certainly be betray'd, and sold by her—

Wit. To some booby of her own breed, who paying too

...

40. . . *The Wives Excuse*; or,
too dear for the purchase, will undo himself, to undo
me.

Wild. Come, come, you are now under my care, 'tis
my fault, if you miscarry—

Wit. And mine too, if I do.

Wild. Let me be your trustee—

Wit. Indeed the woman should cheat the man, as
much as she can, before marriage, because, after it, he
has a title of cheating her as long as he lives.

Wild. If you can't make over your money, make over
your—

Wit. Common conveyances both in our sex, sir.

Wild. A maidenhead's a jewel of no value in marri-
age—

Wit. 'Tis never set down indeed, in the particular of
a woman's estate.

Wild. and therefore least miss'd by a husband, of any
thing she brings along with her.

Wit. If indeed, by the articles of marriage, a man
should covenant for a maidenhead, the woman, in a le-
gal honesty, ought to satisfy the bargain; but the men
never mention that, for fear of inflaming the jointure.

Wild. And the women never put 'em upon't.

Wit. Out of a conscience in their dealings to be sure,
for fear they should not always be able to be as good as
their words.

Wild. I see, madam, we differ only in our sexes; and
now, if you please, we will beget a right understanding
between them too.

Wit. How, sir!

Wild. I'll shew you how: have a care what you do,
madam; 'tis a very difficult matter, let me tell you, to
refuse a man handsomely: look you, madam, I would
have you make a decent resistance, a little of it enhances
the favour, and keeps up the value of our person; but
too much on't is an undervaluing of mine. Nay, nay,
when it once comes to fighting, you often ruin what
you wou'd raise. Struggling too long, is as much to your
disadvantage, as not struggling at all; and you know 'tis
the-

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the same thing to a woman, a man's being indifferent, as his being incapable to oblige her——come, come, enough of this——

Wit. So I say too, sir, the jest will go no further, I see. [Unmasks, he declines into a respect to her.

Wild. Mrs. *Witwoud!* I did not expect to see you here, indeed, madam.

Wit. I came upon business, Mr. *Wilding*, but the temptation of a vizard mask, and the pleasure of prating upon such an occasion, has carried me a little beyond it.

Wild. I am oblig'd to you for a great deal of wit, whatever else you design me by this visit.

Wit. Which now you hardly thank me for; since 'tis impossible for an old acquaintance to answer your expectations of a new face.

Wild. To shew how I value your visit, and the regard I have for you, I will give some necessary orders in the family, to prevent your being seen in my lodgings, and wait upon you again. [Exit.

Wit. By this extraordinary care of my reputation, I find he has no design upon it himself: not that I have any design upon Mr. *Wilding*; but I am sorry to find, that every man has not a design upon me; for 'tis want is the rate of things, I know no real value of reputation, but in regard of common women, who have none; no extraordinary worth of a maidenhead, but as 'tis a temptation to the man to take it away; and the best commendation of virtue is, that every man has a design to put it to the trial. It vexes me tho', to think he should grow so tame upon the sight of me; not that I believe I had any thing in my face that alter'd him; something did, that's certain; by whch I find 'tis not enough for a woman to be handsome, there must be a probability of making that handsome woman kind, to make a man in love with her, for no man is in love without some encouragement to hope upon: now from one of my character, who have impertinently prated away so much of my time, (in setting up for a wit, to the ruin of other people's pleasure, and the loss of my own) what encouragement,

ragement or probability can there be, but that, as I have liv'd a fool, I ought to die repeating, un pity'd, and a maid: if I had dy'd a maid, 'tis but what I deserv'd for laughing so many honest gentlemen off their charitable design of making me otherwise.

Wilding enters to her.

Wild. Now, madam, you command me.

Wit. It shall be to do yourself a favour then, Mr. *Wilding*, to rid you of an incumbrance, which lies as heavy upon your pleasures, as a wife upon her husband.

Wild. O defend me from a wife!

Wit. And from a fil'y mistress, sir, the greater burthen of the two: a wife you may lay aside, but a foolish fond mistress will hang about you like your conscience, to put you in mind of your sins, before you are willing to repeat of 'em: you know whom I mean, Mr. *Wilding*; you may trust me with the secret, because I know it already.

Wild. That's one very good reason truly, madam.

Wit. My cousin *Fanny* indeed is very well in her person—

Wild. I'm glad on't.

Wit. Very well to be lik'd I mean.

Wild. I mean so too, madam: tho' I have known a clap mistaken for a maidenhead before now. [Aside.]

Wit. But she's a girl, and I can guess how very unfit a girl must be to give you any desire beyond undoing her: for I know your temper so well, (now you have satisfy'd the curiosity or vanity of your love) you would not bear the punishment of her company another day, to have the pleasure of it another night, whatever you have said to persuade her to the contrary.

Wild. Fie, madam; think better of me.

Wit. Better nor worse than I do of all the young men in town: for I believe you would now resign her to any body else, with as much satisfaction as you got her for yourself: I know most of those matters end in the benefit of the public: and a little of your ill usage (which you will take care to supply her withal) may make her one

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one of the common goods of the town : but that's a ruin I would prevent if I could : therefore, to save you the labour of getting rid of her (for that's the only design you have now upon her, I'm sure) I came to spare your good-nature the trouble, by making you a very fair offer.

Wild. Let's see how reasonable you can be, in another body's bargain.

Wit. Very reasonable you shall find me, if you will but give over your farther attempts upon her, (which now you may easily be persuaded to I suppose) and contribute, by your assistance, to my design of marrying her ; I will engage myself and interest (which you know is very considerable in my own sex) to serve you in any other woman of my acquaintance.

Wild. Faith, madam, you bid like a chapman.

Wit. Any woman, of any family or condition, the best friend I have I'll befriend you in, and thank you into the bargain.

Wild. Stay, let me consider which ——

Wit. But take this advice along with you ; raise the scene of your affairs above the conquest of a girl. Some of you sparks think, if you can but compass a maidenhead, though but your taylor's daughter's, you have settled a reputation for ever. Why, sir, there are maidenheds among the women of quality, though not so many perhaps ; but there are favours of all kinds to be had among 'em ; as easily brought about, and at the same price of pains, that you can purchase a chamber-maid's,

Wild. I'm glad you tell me so.

Wit. Why, there's Mrs. Newlove and her cousin True-games, Mrs. Artif, Mrs. Dancer, lady Smirkit, lady Wex'd-more ; and twenty more of your acquaintance and mine, all very fine women to the eye ——

Wild. And of reputation to the world.

Wit. Why those very women of reputation to the world have every one of 'em, to my certain knowledge, an intrigue upon their hands, at this very time ; for I'm intimate with all of 'em.

Wild.

Wild. I see you are.

Wit. But, as fine as they seem to the eye, Mr. Wilding, what with the false complexions of their skins, their hair and eye-brows ; with other defects about 'em, which I must not discover of my friends, you know ; with their stinking breath in the morning, and other unsavory smells all the day after, they are most of them intolerable to any man that has the use of his nose.

Wild. That I could not believe indeed, but that you tell me so.

Wit. Then there's Mrs. Faceall, a very fair woman indeed, and a great fortune : as much in shape as you see her, I have been a godmother to two of her children, and she passes for a very good maid still.

Wild. She pass'd upon me I assure you ; for I was very near marrying her myself once.

Wit. Chuse where you please, but I would not advise you to any I have nam'd yet.

Wild. Is there any hopes of Mrs. Friendall ?

Wit. Little or none, yet a while, I believe : Mr. Lovemore has at present engaged her : but there's my cousin Sightly ! Lord, that I should forget her so long ! that I should be so backward in serving a friend ! she is the fittest woman in the world for you ; the most convenient for your purpose in all the town ; easy in her humour and fortune, and able to make her lover so every way ; she shall be the woman.

Wild. Would you would make her so.

Wit. I can and will make her so. We shall walk in the Mall this morning, if you think fit to be there, it may introduce the acquaintance.

Wild. I'll but dress, and be with you.

Wit. I don't doubt, but in a little time, to give you an opportunity, and the lady an inclination of having it improved, but that must be your business : I'm a-going about mine, to make her a visit. Remember our bargain, sir. [Exit.

Wild. I warrant you :

Let whore-masters rejoice ; the times must mend,
If every woman has but such a friend.

[Exit.
A C T

ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE Ruffle's Lodgings.

Enter Ruffle and Servant.

Ruf. **A** Gentleman to speak with me! I am gone to *Banstead-downs* to the horse-match.

Serv. There's no match there, sir, this fortnight.

Ruf. Not this fortnight! I had forgot myself: but you may say, I went out by five in the morning, and you don't know when I come back. Go, tell him so.

Serv. I have told him already you were within, sir.

Ruf. Pox on him, what manner of man is he? Does he look like a man of business?

Serv. Not much like a man of business.

Ruf. No, I warrant you; some coxcombly companion or other, that visits in a morning; and makes other people idle, not to be idle himself. But can't you tell what he would have with me?

Serv. I'll ask him, if you please.

Ruf. He may be a messenger for ought I know.

Serv. I'll bring an account of him. [Exit.

Ruf. Would he were a messenger: I could be contented to pay the fees, to be secur'd in the hands of the government for a fortnight. Well, this guilt is certainly very terrible. The blow I gave *Friendall* was a very ill thing done of me; it lies heavier upon my conscience this morning, than it did upon his face last night.

Servant re-enters.

Serv. His name is captain *Springame*: you know his business, he says.

Ruf. Yes, yes, I guess at it: I thought what it wou'd come to. Shew him up to me. [Exit Servant. I must do as well as I can. [Strips into his gown and cap. There comes no good of being too forward upon these occasions—'twill require some time to dress again: 'tis gaining time at least.

Enter

Enter Springame.

Spring. Good morrow, sir, I have a small bill upon you here.

Ruf. A challenge I suppose.

Spring. Payable at sight, as you will find it.

Ruf. You take me unprovided, you see, sir, to answer you at sight.

Spring. I'll stay 'till you dress, sir, if that be all, to have you along with me.

Ruf. Ay, ay, sir, I'll go along with you ; never doubt it, sir ; you shan't stay long for me ; I may dress time enough for somebody, if that be your busines ; I'll do the gentleman reason, I warrant him.

Spring. We ask no more, sir.

Ruf. You are his friend, I suppose ?

Spring. At your friend's service : I serve upon these occasions sometimes, by way of second, or so, when I want employment of my own.

Ruf. Is fighting your employment ?

Spring. 'Tis a soldier's employment.

Ruf. Why, really, sir, I beg your pardon, I'm sorry I must disappoint you ; I never make use of a second ; especially in such a quarrel as this is ; where I am so much in the wrong already, that I am almost unwilling to engage in it any farther myself : where is your friend, pray ?

Spring. Below in a coach, sir.

Ruf. O dear sir, don't let him wait upon me, bring him up, I beseech you — and d'ye hear, sir, I'm loath to justify an ill thing, if he is resolv'd to be satisfy'd, why with all my heart, sir, I'll give him the satisfaction of a gentleman, I'll beg his pardon ; pray tell him so.

[*Exit Springame.*

Ruf. If fighting be his employment, wou'd he were at it, or any where else, and I fairly rid of him : I cou'd discover now that *Lovemore* set me on to affront him ; that wou'd throw the quarrel upon *Lovemore* : but then *Lovemore* knows me, and I must expect to be scurvily us'd

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us'd by him if I do : hang baseness ; 'tis but begging
pardon at last.

Springame enters with Mr. Friendall.

Spring. A very civil gentleman, brother, he is not the
man you took him for.

Ruf. No indeed, sir, the captain's in the right ; I never
justify an ill thing.

Mr. Fri. 'Tis very well you don't, sir.

Ruf. I am more a man of honour, I assure you, sir.

Mr. Fri. I shall be glad to find you so.

Ruf. Sir, you shall find me so ; I scorn to do an ill
thing as much as any man : I was last night in the
wrong, as every man is sometimes ; and I'm sorry for't :
what would you have more, sir ?

Mr. Fri. That is not enough, sir, I must have more.

Ruf. Why, I beg your pardon, sir.

Mr. Fri. What's begging my pardon, sir, for such a
public affront ?

Spring. So, now he grows upon him. [Aside.]

Mr. Fri. That won't do my busines, begging my
pardon : my reputation's at stake, and that must be sa-
tisfy'd before you and I part, sir.

Ruf. Lord, sir, you are the strangest man in the world ;
you won't oblige me to justify an ill thing, wou'd you ?

Mr. Fri. Damme, sir, what do you mean, not to give
me satisfaction ?

Ruf. I mean, sir, to give you any satisfaction in rea-
son ; but I can't fight against my conscience if I were to
be hang'd, sir, not I.

Spring. No, brother, that's a little too hard upon the
gentleman : you see his conscience won't suffer him to
fight with you.

Mr. Fri. Dama him and his conscience ; he made no
conscience of affronting me.

Spring. But his conincience has flown in his face since,
it seems.

Mr. Fri. And now he finds it only in his fears.

Spring. Come, come, you may be satisfy'd without
fighting.

Mr.

Lovemore enters and joins with Friendall.

Love. Pox on't, they're here before me.

Ruf. Captain, I'll beg your friend's pardon, in any public place, at the music-meeting, if he pleases—

Spring. That's staying too long for't.

Ruf. Or in full *Mall*, before the beaux, or the officers of the guard ; or at *Will's coffee-house* before the wits, or in the playhouse, in the pit, before the wizard-masks, and orange-wenches ; or behind the scenes, before the women actors ; or any where else, but upon the stage ; and you know, one wou'd not willingly be a jest to the upper galleries.

Mr. Fri. You hear what he says, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I'll do you justice, sir.

Ruf. If none of these offers will serve his turn,

[*Seeing Lovemore be takes heart a*
Sir, if your friend will be satisfy'd with nothing but extremities, let him look to himself, let what will be the consequence ; I must do as well as I can with him.

Love. So, he has seen me I find.

Spring. What the devil he won't fight at last sure. [*Afide.*

Ruf. Sir, your most humble servant ; you guess these gentlemen's business I suppose : I have offer'd 'em any satisfaction in reason : but taking me, as you see, sir, at a disadvantage, two to one, nothing wou'd content 'em without exposing myself, as a rascal, to all the town, sir ; now, sir, you are more a gentleman I know, and they shall be damn'd before I give 'em any other satisfaction, now I have a man of honour to stand by me.

Love. Gentlemen, I came to reconcile you if I can : what say you ?

Spring. He offer'd just now to beg my brother's pardon in the playhouse.

Ruf. Make your best on't ; I did so.

Mr. Fri. Then let it be to-night in the fide-box, before the ladies—

Ruf. With all my heart, sir.

Mr. Fri. For they are the part of the town that a man of

of pleasure should secure a reputation withal. Your servant sir. *Lavemore*, your humble servant.

[Friendall and Springame go out.

Love. And hast thou begg'd his pardon?

Ruf. And glad to come off so: I was never so put to't, to bring myself off a quarrel before: it had been impossible, if the captain had not done a good office between us; but I bore up as soon as I saw you.

Love. But then 'twas too late. You had sneakingly begg'd his pardon before: if you had sent to me at first, I wou'd have brought you off cleverly: suppose he had carry'd you behind Southampton house, which he never intended, 'twas but falling down, or dropping your sword, when you came there, to have sav'd all: bat now you have ruin'd your own reputation, and my design upon him for ever.

Ruf. What cou'd I do? He not only sent me a challenge, but came himself to carry me along with him.

Love. How? Send you a challenge, and come with it himself! that's something odd; pray, let's see the challenge.

Ruf. There 'tis; make your best on't; the paper will make admirable crackers for a lord mayor's show, every word in't is as hot as gun-powder; I am glad I am rid on't.

[Exit.

Love. If this be *Friendall's* stile, 'tis mightily mended of late: I have a note of his about me upon *Child*, for money won at play: I'll compare 'em—'Tis not his had neither—Nay then there's more in't—This may be a stratagem of his wife's—I've seen her hand, and think this very near it: it must be so: but then *Friendall's* coming for satisfaction, is an argument he might send this challenge: but coming at the same time with it himself, is an argument against him, that he knew nothing of the matter. For tho' he delivers his love-letters, he wou'd hardly deliver his challenges himself: and for his coming here, *Springame* might put him upon't, from a reasonable probability that this fellow was a rascal. I don't know what to fix upon: this challenge will be of use to me with the lady: I'll take it for granted that she writ it, and proceed upon it accordingly. [Exit]

*Enter Mr. Friendall, Springame, Mrs. Friendall, and
Mrs. Teazall.*

Spring. Brother, if you have no farther service for me, I must think of employing myself, my walk lies another way. [Exit.]

Mrs. Fri. I'm glad you're rid of this business so handsomely Mr. Friendall, and that Mr. Lovemore was by at his begging your pardon.

Mr. Fri. When I undertake things of this kind, I always go thro' with 'em.

Mrs. Fri. This is very well over, and I hope you will take care to keep out of 'em for the future.

Mr. Fri. Every man has the misfortune of 'em sometimes, madam.

Mrs. Fri. But 'tis a prudent man's part to keep out of the occasion of 'em: and, in order to't, Mr. Friendall, I cou'd wish you wou'd not make your house, as you daily do, one of the public places of the town.

Teaz. She's in the right on't indeed, Mr. Friendall; you are very happy in the discretion of a good lady, if you know when you're well; there are very few women wou'd quarrel with your good nature in this point, sir; but she has too great a regard to her own and your reputation, you see, not to apprehend the malice of ill-tongues upon the liberties you allow in your family; the greater part of your friends take notice of it already, and let me tell you, sir, are extremely concern'd.

Mr. Fri. That they are past the pleasures of good company themselves: why really, madam, I believe it; but they may say what they will, I shall do what I please: I live to myself, and not to the whimsical humour of the graver part of my friends, and so you may tell 'em, good madam, from your humble servant. [Going.]

Mrs. Fri. You won't leave us, Mr. Friendall?

Mr. Fri. I'll go home with you like a good husband, madam: but no man of fashion, you know, walks with his wife; besides, there's a noble lord I must walk with. [Exit.]

Mrs. Fri. Any thing to be rid of my company.

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Teaz. Why, how have the men, at this rate, the impudence to think the women should not cuckold 'em! if I had such a husband, as old as I am, a'my conscience, I believe, I shou'd use him as he deserv'd: but that's some comfort, use him as you please, nobody will think you wrong him; and let me tell you, 'tis a great thing to have the town on one's side.

Mrs. Fri. I'll keep 'em so, if I can.

Teaz. Nay, faith and troth, you have given him fair warning; if he won't take it, he must answer himself for all the miscarriages you can be guilty of in your conduct hereafter.

Mrs. Fri. There's something more in that, Mr. *Teaz-all.* [Exeunt]

Enter Lovemore and Wellvile following 'em.

Well. There's your Mrs. *Friendall* before us: I honour her character as much as I despise her husband's.

Love. Tho' he has 'scap'd the public discovery, if she knows him to be a coward, it does my busines still as well.

Well. If I did not thikp him one, I wou'd put him to a trial he shou'd not so easily get clear off, for putting a note into Mrs. *Sigbly's* hand at the music-meeting.

Love. How!

Well. But I owe him a good turn for it.

Love. It comes into my head, and you shall pay him the good turn: what if you put Mrs. *Sigbly* upon telling his wife of it?

Well. Ha!

Love. You ought to do it.

Well. I think so too myself; and you may be satisfy'd I'll do it; more out of a regard to the woman I value so much, than any design of promoting your cuckolding the fool.

Love. Good grave fir, the plot is never the worse, I hope, for carrying your friend's interest along with the ladies.

Well. Make your best use on't, *Lovemore*, I'm contented we shou'd thrive together. [Exeunt.]

D 2

Enter

Enter Mrs. Sightly and Witwoud after 'em.

Wit. You are mightily injur'd indeed, madam, to be persuaded to come abroad, so much to your disadvantage, such a delicate morning as this is, so much against your inclinations: but you'll know your int'rest better, in a little time, and me for your friend, I suppose, when you find the benefit of it.

Sight. Nay, coufin, the injury may be forgiven, for the pleasure of the walk, at this time of the year.

Wit. Why, the very walk is to be lik'd, tho' there were nobody in it to like us: but there's a great deal of good company in the Mall, and I warrant you, we'll have our share of the commendation of the place, in spight of fresher faces: you are sure of your part of it already.

Sight. How so, good Mrs. *Witwoud*?

Wit. Why, good Mrs. *Sightly*, there's Mr. *Wellwile* before you.

Sight. My Platonic lover as you call him.

Wit. And as you find him.

Sight. I think him very much my friend.

Wit. Very much your friend! I grant you indeed, every woman, that is not wholly insensible, (and one would not be thought insensible you know) every woman ought to have a Platonic passion for one man or other: but a Platonic lover in a man! is—

Sight. What pray?

Wit. Why, he is a very unmannerly fellow; he is not what he should be, that's certain: as for the matter of respect, which we keep such a clatter about, and seem to value so much in the men, all that I know of it is, that if any man pretended to follow and like me, I should never believe what he said, if he did not do something to convince me: I should think he affronted me extremely, if upon the first handsome occasion, he did not offer me every thing in his power.

Sight. How cousin!

Wit. I hate a blockhead that will never give a woman a reputable occasion of refusing him: 'tis one of the best compliments a lover can make his mistress's pride, and I never knew any man that did his business without it.

Sight.

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Sight. Why *Witwoud*, thou art mad sure.

Wit. Not for your Mr. *Wellvile*; if I were in your place, I should have something the better opinion of him, if he would have a worse opinion of me: but between you and me, I should not like him for a lover.

Sight. He does not pretend to be one.

Wit. Who's here? *Wilding* and *Courtall* behind us? That *Wilding*, cousin, is a very pretty gentleman.

Sight. And *Courtall* too, very well.

Wit. I must bring you acquainted with *Wilding*.

Sight. No more acquaintance, good *Witwoud*.

Wit. For his discretion and conduct, his good behaviour, and all that, *Wellvile* is his acquaintance, and will answer for: but his agreeable, easy wit, and good humour, you may take upon my word: you'll thank me when you know him. [Exit.]

Ester Wilding and Courtall.

Wild. She's a woman of her word: you see she has brought Mrs. *Sigbily* along with her.

Court. I never doubted it: she'll carry her to supper in a night or two: she's never the worse bawd, I hope, for being a gentlewoman.

Wild. A good family indeed gives a countenance to the profession; and a reputation is necessary to carry on the credit of a trade.

Court. Here's *Wellvile* just behind us.

Wild. Pr'ythee stay with him: I'll tell you how I thrive. [Exit.]

Ester Wellvile.

Well. Good morrow Mr. *Courtall*.

Court. O sir, yours.

Well. Was not that *Wilding* left you?

Court. He's in his employment, sir, very busy.

Well. In pursuit of the women I know: it hardly answers the expence I doubt.

Court. You have no reason to say so: there's a lady before us of your acquaintance, Mrs. *Sigbily* by name, of another opinion: I suppose she thinks such an assurance as his, in coming to the point, is more to the nature of the thing, than all your ceremony and respect.

Well. Mrs. Sightly!

Court. She, sir, the very same : I could tell you a secret, *Wellwile*; but you are one of those fellows, that hate another man should lye with a woman, tho' you never attempt her yourself : I confess I am something of your mind : I think enjoyment the dull part of an intrigue, and therefore I give it over, when I see the lady in earnest.

Well. But the secret, Courtall.

Court. Why faith, *Wellwile*, if you have temper to manage it, the secret may be of use to you : *Wilding*, you know, never debauches a woman, only for himself ; where he visits, in a little time, every man may be receiv'd in his turn. You must know, 'twas *Witwoud* put him upon *Mrs. Sightly* ; she knew what she did I suppose, and has promis'd him a good office in her way : make your advantage of what I tell you ; but not a syllable to any one.

Enter Springame.

Spring. O *Courtall* ! here are a couple of vizard-masks have set upon me in the next walk, and I wanted thee to take one of 'em off my hands.

Court. I'll stand by you, my noble captain. [*Exeunt.*]

Well. (*solus*) I'll think no more on't, 'tis impossible : what's impossible ? nothing's impossible to a woman : we judge but on the outside of that sex ; and know not what they can, nor what they do, more than they please to shew us. I have known *Mrs. Sightly* these seven years—known her, I mean, I have seen her, observ'd her, follow'd her : may be there's no knowing a woman : but in all that time, I never found a freedom that allowed me any encouragement beyond a friend—May be I have been wanting to myself—but then she would not throw herself away upon a common lover ; that's not probable : if she had been affectedly reserv'd, I wou'd suspect the devil in her heart had stamp'd the sign of virtue in her looks, that she might cheat the world, and sin more close. But she is open in her carriage, easy, clear of those arts that have made lust a trade—Perhaps that opennes

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openness may be design——'tis easy to raise doubts——
and still she may be——I won't think she can——'till I
know more: but *Witwoud* is, I know her, every thing
that's mischievous; abandon'd and undone; undone her-
self, she wou'd undo the sex: she is to bawd for *Wild-
ing*: I know her bad enough for any trade. But bawds
have some good nature, and procure pleasure for pay: *Witwoud* has baser ends, a general ruin upon all her
friends. [Several pass over the stage, Mr. Friendall
flighted by 'em, one after another.

1 Lord. I have a little business at present; but I shall
see you at the play. [Exit.

Mr. Fri. In the king's box, my lord——
My dear lord, I am your humble servant. [To another:

2 Lord. Another time, good Mr. Friendall; you see
I'm engag'd. [Exit.

Mr. Fri. A pox o'their engagements: a man can't
make one among 'em. O my most noble lord!

3 Lord. I know you will upbraid me, Mr. Friendall;
but I'll recover your opinion, and come and dine with
you. Let's have *Jock Dryden* and *Will Wyckerty*, as you
call 'em: some of these days we'll be very witty to-
gether: but now I am your servant. [Exit.

Mr. Fri. This is a very unfortunate morning with me:
I have not walk'd one turn with a lord since I came in;
I see I must take up with the men of wit to-day——O
Mr. Wellvile!

Well. Don't let me keep you from better company.

Mr. Fri. Faith, sir, I prefer a man of wit to a man of
of quality at any time.

Well. If she thinks *Witwoud* her friend after this, 'tis a
sign she's pleas'd with it, and there's an end on't.

Mr. Fri. Why, *Well-vile*, thou art *cogitabund*, as a man
may say; thy head is running upon thy poetry.

Well. I beg your pardon, sir, I did not mind you in-
deed. Your servant, Mr. *Wilding*——

Wilding enters to 'em.

Mr. Fri. *Wilding*, yours. But *Well-vile*, pr'ythee,
what is't to be? A song? a tribute to the whole sex? or

a particular sacrifice? or is't a libel upon the court? ha! (w'll keep your counsel) or a lampoon upon the town? What, I am a great honourer and humble servant of the Muses myself—

Well. A very favourite of 'em, I bear sir.

Mr. Fri. I sometimes scribble indeed for my diversion—

Wild. And the diversion of the ladies, Mr. Friendall—
Well. And the diversion of the town, Mr. Friendall.

Mr. Fri. Why, faith gentlemen, poetry is a very pretty amusement, and, in the way of intrigue or so, among the better rank of people, I have known a paper of verses go farther with a lady in the purchase of a favour, than a present of fifty pounds would have done.

Wild. O, sir, 'tis the only way of purchasing a woman that is not to be bought.

Mr. Fri. But, *Will-vile*, pr'ythee communicate, man.

Well. Why, if you will have it, I have a design upon a play.

Mr. Fri. Gad so, let me write a scene in it; I have a thousand times had it in my head, but never could bring it about to write a play yet.

Wild. No, no; you had it not in your head, sir.

Mr. Fri. I vow to gad, but I have then twenty times, I'm confident; but one thing or other always kick'd it out again: but I promise you I'll write a scene for you.

Wild. Before you know the subject?

Mr. Fri. Pr'ythee, what is't? But be what is will, here's my hand upon't, I'll write it for you.

Well. You must know then, sir, I am scandaliz'd extremely to see the women upon the stage make cuckolds at that insatiable rate they do in all our modern comedies; without any other reason from the poets, but, because a man is married he must be a cuckold: now, sir, I think, the women are most unconscionably injur'd by this general scandal upon their sex; therefore to do 'em what service I can in their vindication I design to write a play, and call it—

Mr. Fri. Ay, what, I beseech you? I love to know the name of a new play.

Well. *The Wives Excuse; or, Cuckolds make Themselves.*

Mr.

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Mr. Fri. A very pretty name faith and troth; and very like to be popular among the women.

Wild. And true among the men..

Mr. Fri. But what characters have you?

Well. What characters? why I design to shew a fine young woman marry'd to an impertinent, nonsensical, silly, intriguing, cowardly, good-for-nothing coxcomb.

Wild. This blockhead does not know his own picture.

[Aside.]

Mr. Fri. Well, and how? She must make him a cuckold I suppose.

Well. 'Twas that I was thinking on when you came to me.

Mr. Fri. O, yes, you must make him a cuckold.

Wild. By all means a cuckold.

Mr. Fri. For such a character, gentlemen, will vindicate a wife in anything she can do to him. He must be a cuckold.

Well. I am satisfied he ought to be a cuckold; and indeed, if the lady would take my advice, she should make him a cuckold.

Mr. Fri. She'll hear reason I warrant her.

Well. I have not yet determin'd how to dispose of her. But in regard to the ladies, I believe I shall make her honest at last.

Mr. Fri. I think the ladies ought to take it very ill of you if you do: but if she proves honest to the last, that's certain, 'tis more than the fellow deserves. A very pretty character this, faith and troth. [To Wilding.]

Wild. And very well known in this town.

Mr. Fri. Gad, I believe I can help you to a great many hints, that may be very serviceable to you.

Well. I design to make use of you; we, who write plays, must sometimes be beholden to our friends. But more of this at leisure.

Mr. Fri. Will you walk, gentlemen, the ladies are before us.

Well. I have a little business with Wilding. We'll follow you. [Exit Friendall.]

Wild. Business with me, Wellville?

D 5

Will.

Well, Aboat a fair lady, I'll tell you as we walk.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Lovemore with Mrs. Friendall, Mrs. Sightly, Mrs. Witwoud, and Mrs. Teazall.

Teaz. Nay, indeed, Mr. Lovemore, as matters are manag'd between the men and women of the town, 'tis no less a blessing for a lady to have a husband that will but so much as offer to fight for her and her honour, than 'tis for a husband to have a lady that has any honour to defend; there's such a depravity in matrimony, on both sides now-a days.

Sight. Why, good madam, is it such a busines, for a man to offer to fight for his wife?

Wit. All that I know is, the man that would not fight for me, should do nothing else for me.

Teaz. You'll have your wit, let who's will blush for't.

Love. As you say, madam, [To Mrs. Teazall.] a man of honour is a great blessing in a husband; such as Mr. Friendall has shewn himself to be. And here's a lady will value the blessing as it deserves.

Mrs. Fri. I must indeed despise him in my thoughts.

[*Afde.*]

Wit. Fulsome and foolish! let's hear no more on't: they don't thjnk this can blind us. [Walking off with

Sightly.

Love. If you were not inclin'd to it before, madam; this last behaviour of his would engage you to value such a blessing as you ought.

Mrs. Fri. My duty would engage me—what does he mean by this?

Wit. Cousin Teazall, your opinion pray.

Love. I have something to tell you, madam, if you would but allow me; this is no place.

Mrs. Fri. You'll find a time I warrant you. Ladies, the Mall begins to thin. [Goes to 'em.

Wellvile and Wilding coming forward.

Wild. Well, sir, since you declare yourself in love with the

the lady, and I am not, I promise you, and you may trust me, I'll never follow her more.

Will. I do trust, and thank you for the promise. Ladies your servant. [He addresses to Sightly.

Wit. O! he's come at last. [Wilding to Witwoud. There's nothing to be done here; you've outstaid your time; but we'll call at the Chocolate-house in St. Albans-treat, as we go home; you may meet us there by accident, you know.

Wild. If I were to be hang'd now, I must meet 'em there; though I have given my word to the contrary...

Teaz. Is that the filthy fellow?

Wit. That's Wilding, madam.

Teaz. I see there's no knowing a whore master by his face; he looks like a modest, civil gentleman.

Well. Your friend, Mrs. Witwoud, madam, [To Sightly.] may be of that good-natur'd opinion that Lovewore is familiar with the husband, only to be more familiar with the wife. But you must be cautious of what you say, for fear we turn the scandal upon you.

Sight. Upon me, Mr. Wellwile?

Well. Pardon me, madam, I have the freedom of a friend: but Mr. Friendall declares he is in love with you; and after that, the good-natur'd town (whatever they believe) will go near to say, that your familiarity with his wife may be in order to the husband.

Sight. Contemptible! sure nobody would think so?

Well. 'Tis an ill natur'd age to handsome women, madam.

Sight. Must I suffer because he's a fool?

Well. You may suffer because he's a fool.

Sight. This is not only to be accountable for our own conduct, but to answer for all the indiscretion of the men's.

Well. You must madam, for those men's you allow to be so near you.

Sight. It wou'd be but an ungrateful piece of news to Mrs. Friendall, if I should be serious enough to tell her of it.

Well. 'Twould be more ungrateful to her if any body else did ; and would go near to make you serious, if another should tell her for you.

Sight. But who can tell ? It may be the cause of a breach between 'em.

Well. Nay, madam, if it be considerable enough to make a breach in marriage, you may be sure 'twill make a breach in friendship : and how much that will be to the advantage of your reputation upon such an occasion—

Sight. I am convinc'd you are my friend, Mr. Well-wile, and thank you for this care of me.

[*They mingle with Lovemore, Mrs. Friendall, and the rest.*

Wit. This is the aunt would ha' been upon your bones, I assure you, if I had not deliver'd you.

Wild. How shall I do to appease her ?

Wit. There's but one way now to please her. You must know she has been in her time, like other women, in at most of the pleasures of this town ; but being too passionate a lover of the sport, she has been—a bubble at all games : and having now nothing to lose but her money, she declares for *lanterelaw*, and is contented to be only cheated at cards.

Mr. Friendall with Springame and Courtall.

Mr. Fri. Why, what do you think, ladies ? these gentlemen here, in spight of the temptation of so much good company, refuse to dine with me.

Spring. O madam ! are you there ? [To *Witwoud*.

Court. Your brother has seduced me, madam.

[To *Mrs. Fri.*

Spring. We'll visit you at night, ladies, in masquerade ; when the privilege of a wizard will allow us a conversation, out of your forms, and more to our humour a great deal, ladies. [Exeunt *Spring.* and *Court.*

Mr. Fri. Lovemore, Wellwile, Wilding—you'll follow us ?

Lowe. We won't fail you, sir.

[*Mr. Friendall goes out with the ladies.*

Wit.

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Wit. St. Alban-street—

Wild. Will tell you more of this.

Well. Wilding, you'll take another turn with us?

Wild. Faith, no, I'm tir'd : we shall meet at Friendall's all.

[Exit.]

Well. At Friendall's be it then;

Where the kind husband welcomes every guest.

Love. He but invites, his wife must make the feast.

[Exeunt.]

A C T IV. S C E N E I.

S C E N E Mr. Friendall's House.

All the company enter after dinner.

Love. M R. Friendall, you have the best wines, and the greatest choice of any man in town.

Mr. Fri. There's an elegance in eating and drinking, gentlemen, as well as in writing.

Well. Or your style wou'd never go down. [Aside.]

Mr. Fri. How did you like the *Lucina* I gave you, the *Gallicia*, the *Mountain-Alicant*? You taste the sun in them perfectly, gentlemen.

Wild. O plainly, sir!

Mr. Fri. Then the *Arcina*, the *Ranebio*, and the *Peralta*, the *Carcavelis*, the *Lacrymae*, the *Schiveas*, the *Zephalaria*, the *Montalbyne*, with all the *Muscbatellos*, and to conclude, my single bottle of *Tokay*.

Love. Admirable all, sir.

Mr. Fri. A friend of mine, that brought the *Tokay* from *Buda*, assures me, the stones of all those grapes are gold.

Well. That makes the wine so scarce.

Mr. Fri. Nay, not unlikely : but of all the wines of all the climates under the sun—

Wild,

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Wild. Give me the Greek.

Mr. Fri. O, I abominate—

Well. The language, but not the wines; you may relish them without it.

Mr. Fri. Ay, that may be; but of all the wines, Pagan, or Christian, in the world, I think the *Boracchio* the noblest.

Well. 'Tis of the roughest kind indeed, of beasts; wou'd he were in the skin of one of 'em.

Wild. But your *vine de congress*, Mr. *Friendall*—

Mr. Fri. True; but 'tis a *Dutch* wine, and grows in the province of *Zealand*, I have drank it upon the place.

Wild. But, Mr. *Friendall*, pray in all your variety and interest among your friends in the city, have you not sometimes met with such a wine as the *vine de Shorneck*!

Mr. Fri. *Vine de Shorneck*? yes, I have drank of it at *Thompson's*, and was the first that took notice of it; but 'tis a prohibited *French* wine, and I have too great an acquaintance with the members of parliament, not to drink according to law.

Wild. Yours is very good snuff, Mr. *Friendall*.

Mr. Fri. Yes, truly, I think 'tis pretty good powder..

Wild. Pray your opinion of mine, you are a critic.

Mr. Fri. This is *Havanab* indeed; but then 'tis wash'd: give me your dry powders, they never lose their scent: besides, yours is made of the leaves of the tobacco—

Well. Why, what the devil's yours?

Mr. Fri. Mine, sir, is right *Palillio*, made of the fibres, the spirituous part of the plant; there's not a pinch of it out of my box in *England*; 'twas made I assure you to the palate of his most Catholic majesty, and sent me by a great don of *Spain*, that's in his prince's particular pleasures.

[Goes to the women.]

Well. And his, it seems, lie in his nose.

Mr. Fri. Ladies, what say you to the *fresco* of the garden? We'll drink our tea upon the mount, and be the envy of the neighbourhood.

Wit. O delicately thought upon!

Mr. Fri. Madam, which tea shall we have?

Mrs. Fri. Which the company pleases, Mr. *Friendall*.

Mr.

Mr. Fri. The plain Canton, the Nanquin, the Bobea, the Lantberoon, the Sunloe, or which ha' l

Well. Have you any of the *Non Amo Te?*

Mr. Fri. Faith, no, sir, there came but little of it over this year; but I am promis'd a whole canister by a friend of a considerable interest in the committee.

Love. Then the *Bobea*, sir, the *Bobea* will do our busines.

Mr. Fri. My *Bobea*, at the best hand too, cost me ten pound a pound, but I have a tea with a damn'd heathenish hard name, that I think I was very much befriended in at an *Indian* house in the city, if you please, we'll have some of that.

Mrs. Fri. 'Tis in my cabinet, Mr. *Friendall*, I must order it myself for you. [Goes out.

Mr. Fri. That madam must make the compliment the greater to the company; *allows*, you know the way, I wait upon you. [All go out but Lovemore.

Love. This way she must come, she can't avoid me, thanks to the honest husband. [Mrs. Friendall returns.

Mrs. Fri. Are you one of the gentlemen that love the tea with a hard name?

Love. Faith, madam, I must love any thing that gives me an opportunity—

Mrs. Fri. With any woman that has a mind to improve it.

Love. Of adoring you.

Mrs. Fri. Me, Mr. *Lovemore*! I was going before, but now you drive me.

Love. Stay, this violence, if you can call it violence, on my knees, excuses you to all your female forms; nay, to yourself, severer than your form, if you should stay and hear me.

Mrs. Fri. Well, what's the matter?

Love. Every thing is matter of your praise, the subject of fresh wonder: your beauty made to tire the painter's art, your wit to strike the poet's envy dumb.

Mrs. Fri. Are you turn'd poet too?

Love. Indeed you can inspire me—

Mrs. Fri. With the spirit of scandal I may, a small matter

matter conjures up a lampoon against the women——
But to the purpose, sir; you pretend business with me,
and have insinuated a great deal of pains all this day to
get an occasion of speaking to me in private; which now,
by Mr. Friendall's assistance, you think you have ingeniously
secur'd: why, sir, after all, I know no business be-
tween us that is to be carry'd on, by my being alone
with you.

Love. I'm sorry for that indeed, madam.

Mrs. Fri. Suppose, Mr. Lovemore, a man shou'd hit you
a box on the ear.

Love. Only suppose it, good madam.

Mrs. Fri. Why, sir, any man that's brute enough may
do it; tho' that brute should beg your pardon never so
publicly for the wrong, you wou'd never heartily for-
give him for pitching upon you.

Love. Not heartily I believe indeed.

Mrs. Fri. Why, very well: you keep me here against
my will, against all rules of decency to me, my sex,
and character; the worst of wrongs; yet you will think
it hard to be condemn'd, or hated, for your light opinion
of me, that first encourag'd you to this design.

Love. Hated for loving you!

Mrs. Fri. Ay, there's the business: who wou'd not stay
to see her worshipper upon his knees, thus prais'd and
ador'd? her beauty made to tire the painter's art, her
wit to strike the poet's envy dumb; and all deliver'd in
such a dying tone, no lady can out-live it. Mr. Love-
more, you might have known me better, than to imagine
your fly flattery could softly bring me into a consent to
any thing my virtue had abhor'd. But how have I be-
hav'd myself? what have I done to deserve this? what
encouragement have I given you?

Love. A lover makes his hopes.

Mrs. Fri. Perhaps 'tis from the general encouragement
of being a married woman, supported on your side by
that honourable opinion of our sex, that because some
women abuse their husbands, every woman may. I
grant you indeed, the custom of *England* has been very
prevailing in that point; and I must own to you an ill
husband

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husband is a great provocation to a wife, when she has a mind to believe as ill of him as she can.

Loue. How if the wife believe too well of him?

Mrs. Fri. Why then the folly's hers: for my part, I have known Mr. Friendall too long, not to know justly what he deserves; I won't justify his faults, but because he does not take that care of me he shou'd, must not I have that regard to myself I ought? what I do is for my own sake: nay what is past, which, by your hints, I know you do suspect, I own I did it; not for the commendation of your wit, nor as a debt to him, but to myself, foreseeing a long life of infamy, which in his follies I was married to; and therefore sav'd myself by saving him.

Loue. Your conduct every way is excellent, but there it was a master-piece indeed, and worthy admiration.

Mrs. Fri. And wou'd you have me lose that character, so worthy your admiration, which, even you, an enemy, must praise, when you wou'd ruin? no; what I've done to raise this character: may be an argument I will do more to heighten it, to the last act of life.

Loue. And all for the reward of being thought too good a wife to such a husband.

Mrs. Fri. How! you know him then?

Loue. You and I know him.

Mrs. Fri. Fit to bear a wrong? is that the reason of your wronging him? I want but that; O let me but believe you injure him, because you know you may, and attempt me, because you think it safe; and I will scorn you low, as you do him: you say you know him: now, sir, I know you, you, and your practices against us both: you have encourag'd all that has been done, exposing him, only to ruin me. 'Tis necessary to believe as ill of you as I can: and for the future, 'till you clear yourself—

Loue. I can clear myself.

Mrs. Fri. I'll think you capable of every thing; of any baseness to advance your ends; so leave you to your triumph. [Going.

Loue. Madam, stay, I must be justify'd: this challenge here

here has taught me all I know; made me suspect who writ it, and presume all I have said to you.

Mrs. Fri. Where had you it?

Love. Ruffle gave it me. I hope you may forgive my knowing it, since by resigning it into your hands, I give you up the only evidence that can rise up against him: such a piece of news, madam, wou'd have been welcome enough to the ill-nature of the town; and I might have had my ends in such a report, had I encourag'd the exposing him; but when I saw how near you were concern'd, I had no other pleasure but the thought of serving you; if I have serv'd you, I am over paid; if not, I must serve on: for I but live to serve you.

Mrs. Fri. My employment calls upon me; are not you for tea?

Two footmen enter with a service of tea, and go out with Mrs. Friendall.

Love. I find I am restored, but I was reduc'd to the necessity of a lie to come into favour again; but that's a necessity that every man of honour must submit to sometimes, that has any thing to manage with the women: for a lover, that never speaks more than the truth, is never believ'd to be a lover: and he that won't lie to his mistress, will hardly lye with her: so let his honesty reward him; the lady won't, I dare say for her. There must be a cheat upon the sense sometimes, to make a perfect pleasure to the soul: for if the women did but always know what really we are; we shou'd not so often know so much of them as we do: but 'tis their own faults; they know we can't live without 'em, and therefore ask more of us than we have honestly to give for the purchase. So, very often, they put us upon dissimulation, flattery, and false love, to come up to their price. *Mrs. Friendall* went away a little abruptly: I'm glad she did: for that methinks confesses an obligation which she has not yet in her power to return.

Enter Wellvile to him.

Well. Lovemore, your plot begins to thrive: I left Mrs. Sigitly

Sightly telling Mrs. Friendall every thing between her and Mr. Friendall: I thought fit to acquaint you with it, that you might be prepar'd: you know best what use to turn it to: my business is with Mrs. *Sightly*.

Love. I thank you for the news: they're coming this way, I wou'd not have 'em see us: I must hover here.

[*Exeunt Lov. and Wellv.*

: Enter Mrs. Friendall and Mrs. *Sightly*.

Mrs. Fri. I cou'd have believ'd it.

Sight. I am sorry you have reason to believe it upon my account: indeed, I was unwilling to believe it; I suffer'd it as long as I cou'd; but finding no end of this persecution—

Mrs. Fri. You have us'd me like a friend, and I thank you——his note since dinner desires you wou'd meet him at seven, at *Rosamond's* pond: you can't be so hard-hearted to disappoint him?

Sight. If you have a mind to have a plainer proof of his treachery——

Mrs. Fri. The proof is plain enough: you say it: besides he has given it under his hand here; and I believe the gentleman, tho' you won't.

Sight. Or if you wou'd, let him know you have discovered him, and upbraid him with his baseness before me—

Mrs. Fri. That wou'd but harden him, or make him vain, by shewing a concern for him.

Sight. If you have any curiosity to be satisfy'd, I'll go with you to the place appointed.

Mrs. Fri. I wou'd not have him know either of us.

Sight. Then we must have a man to secure us.

Mrs. Fri. We may trust your friend Mr. *Wellvile*.

Sight. Mr. *Friendall*, you must know, thinks him in love with me; so being a rival, may make him avoid us: but Mr. *Lovemore* will do as well.

Mrs. Fri. I wou'd not have him know it.

Sight. He knows it already; I made no secret of it, and Mr. *Wellvile* told it him.

Mrs. Fri. Then he, or any one——

Enter

Enter Lovemore to 'em.

Sigbt. O ! here he comes ; Mr. Lovemore, we must employ you this afternoon.

Lov. To serve myself, in waiting upon you.

The rest of the company enter to them.

Teaz. Well, here's such a clutter to get you to cards : you have drank your tea : what will you do next, I trow ?

Wit. Why take a napp, or smoak a pipe, any body that has a mind to be private.

Teaz. Wou'd I had one civilly in a corner.

Mr. Fri. Get the cards in the drawing-room. [To a serv.

Wit. Not till we have the song, Mr. Friendall, you promis'd us.

Mr. Fri. Why, faith, I was forc'd to set it myself : I don't know how you'll like it with my voice ; but faith and troth, I believe the masters of the mufie-meeting, may set their own words, for any trouble I shall give 'em for the future about mine.

Wild. Nay, then you ruin 'em.

Wit. The song, the song, sir.

S O N G, written by a man of quality.

I.

SAY, cruel Amoret, how long
In billet-doux, and bumble song,
Shall poor Alexis woo ?
If neither writing, fighting, dying,
Reduce you to a soft complying :
O ! when will you come to ?

II.

Full thirteen moons are now past o'er,
Since first those stars I did adore,
That set my heart on fire :
The conscious play-bouts, parks, and court,
Have seen my sufferings made your sport :
Yet am I ne'er the nigher.

III.

III.

*A faithful lover shou'd deserve
A better fate than thus to starve
In sight of such a feast :
But ob I if you'll not think it fit,
Your hungry slave shou'd taste one bit ;
Give some kind looks at least.*

Wild. Admirable well.—

Wit. Sett and sung, sir.

Lov. A gentleman does these things always best.

Wild. When he has a genius.

Mr. Fri. Ay, sir, he must have a genius : there's no being a master of any thing without a genius.

Mrs. Fri. Mrs. Teazall, Pam wants you in the next room. [Scene draws, shows tables and cards.

Teaz. I'll make the more of him, when I get him into my hands.

Well. I have something to tell you, worth more than the cards can win for you.

Mr. Fri. Who's for come t

Lov. I am your man, madam.

Mrs. Fri. You play too deep for me.

Wit. Cousin, you'll make one of us ?

Sight. I go your halves, if you please, I don't care for playing myself. [They go in to play. The scene shuts upon 'em. Wellvile and Sightly stay.

Sight. Now, Mr. Wellvile; you have something extraordinary to say to me.

Well. I have, indeed, madam ; but I shou'd prepare you for the story, there are some friends in it, that you will be concern'd to have an ill opinion of.

Sight. I have reason to think you my friend.

Well. Then pray give me leave to ask, how long you have known Mr. Wilding.

Sight. I never spoke to him 'till this morning at the chocolate-house, as we came from the park.

Well. I think he's Mrs. Witwoud's particular acquaintance.

Sight.

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Sight. That, I suppose, gave him the title of speaking to us.

Well. And she has a mind to bring him acquainted with you. I'm sorry I must warn you of him: I was in hopes it wou'd have dy'd of itself: but his talking to you, at the chocolate-house, after he had promis'd never to follow you more, makes me apprehend, that he is still carrying on his design upon you.

Sight. A design upon me!

Well. He has a design upon you: and you have heard enough of his character, to suspect the honour of any design he has upon any woman: but such as it is, your cousin *Witwoud*; and very good friend, for ends of her own, which I can inform you in, has undertaken to bring it about. I see you are surpris'd.

Sight. I pray, sir, go on.

Well. I never pretended to be a friend of Mrs. *Witwoud's*, but now I hate her: and what I tell you, is not to ruin her with you; but of nearer consequence, to save you from being undone by her: this is not a secret; I'll tell her of it myself, and my thoughts of her into the bargain: but, madam, you know best, how far she has solicited his cause to you; how far my story is probable; and whether you don't think, she persuaded you to walk this morning in the Mall, in order to meet Mr. *Wilaing*: that was the business of her visit to you, as he tells me, whatever she pretended to the contrary.

Sight. You astonish me.

Well. I am astonish'd myself, indeed, madam, not to find her as I always thought her, fit for any mischief: but to think she can pretend to be a bawd, and provide no better for a friend: to sacrifice you to a man, who wou'd tell all the town of it, as well as *Courtall*, and has confess'd to me, that he never was in love with you, nor had a thought that way, 'till she put it into his head, and promis'd to assist him in't.

Sight. Unheard of villany!

Well. Faith, madam, if I might advise you, it shou'd be to a man of honour at least; that can be so tender of a reputation, not to lessen a lady's favour so far, to make it

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it the common mirth of the town : if you have any favours to dispose of, dispose of 'em yourself : let not another run away with the benefit of your good turns. I have been an old admirer, madam ; and I hope stand as fair, and have as good a title to put in my claim, as any man of her providing.

Sight. So, sir, then it seems you think I must be provided for, and therefore these advances must please me : I have some reason to believe what you say of my cousin *Witwoud* ; but I have no reason to think you very much my friend ; she has betray'd me, and you are pleased to think I deserve it : I thank you for your caution : but it shall secure me for the future, against her and you. For as much as I thought you my friend ; nay, though I languish'd for you, the encouragement you are pleas'd to make, from other peoples base opinion of me, shall teach me to despise you. [*The scene opens, the company rise from play, and come forward.*]

Tiaz. Nay, nay, I have done with you : if this be your fair play, there's no danger of your soul ; why, you make no conscience of cheating any body out of your own gang.

Wit. Conscience at cards, cousin ! you are a better bred lady than to expect it.

Mr. Fri. Conscience, madam, is of serious affairs, no body minds it at play.

Tiaz. Nay I'm ev'n right enough serv'd ; I deserv'd it, that's the truth on't : I must be playing with company so much younger than myself ; but I shall be wiser for the future, and play the fool in my own form, where I may cheat in my turn.

Mrs. Fri. If you speak of your losings, madam, I believe my fortune has been harder than yours ; in ten sets running with Mr. *Wilding*, I never turn'd one, nor had comet in my hand.

Wit. Nay, if you win her money, you may win every thing of her, of you know how to manage your game.

[*Goes to Mrs. Sightly.*

Wild. And faith I'll play it as well as I can.

Wit. Cousin, I have won an estate for you.

Sight.

Sight. You have undone me. [Exit, Wit. following.
Wild. I'll watch my time, and follow 'em.

Mr. Fri. Lovemore, pr'ythee keep the company together; I have an appointment upon my hands, and must leave you: we must serve one another sometimes, you know.

[Goes off.]

Enter Servant.

Serv. Madam, the Jew, newly turn'd protestant, that my master was godfather to, has brought the essences and sweet-waters he order'd him to raffle for.

Mr. Fri. Shall we try, whether we like any of 'em:

Well. We shall find him a Jew still in his dealings. I suppose. [Going.]

Lov. You wou'd not have him lose by his conversion, I hope.

Wild. Like other wise men, he's for saving soul and body together, I warrant him. [They go in.]

S C E N E changes to the garden.

Witwoud following Sightly.

Sight. Never think of denying, or excusing it to me, I am satisfied there's more in it than you ought to defend; there are so many circumstances to convince me of your treachery to me, I must believe it.

Wit. I see, cousin, you will believe any thing against me: but as I hope to be sav'd, upon the faith of a christian, and may I never rise off my knees into your good opinion again, if I don't abhor the villainy you lay to my charge; something I must confess to you, but I beg you to forgive me, 'twas unadvis'd indeed, but innocent, and without a design upon you: *Curtali*'s a coxcomb, and nothing but *Wilding*'s vanity, or *Wellwil*'s revenge, cou'd be necessary to the ruin of me with you, the only relation I love and value in the world.

Sight. O! I had forgot the pains you took to secure me, to-morrow night at cards at your lodgings with *Mr. Wilding*: cousin, let me tell you, a bawd is the worst part

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part of an intrigue, and the least to be said for't in excuse of the infamy. But you had something more than a lover to provide for me, or you wo'd not have expos'd me to a man that wo'd expose me to all the town; is it because I have been your best and last friend, (for you will hardly find such another in your family) that thus you reward me for the folly? Or is it because I am a witness of your shame, that you wo'd be a contriver of mine? I know, (and I look upon it as a judgment upon the former follies of your life) that you are notoriously abandon'd to the beastly love of a fellow, that no body else can look upon; and may be, you are mischievously pleas'd to make me as despicable as yourself; there must be the devil in the bottom on't, and I'll fly from him in you.

Wit. O! don't leave me in this passion, I am utterly ruin'd if you go; upon my knees I beg it of you.

Sight. Cousin, I forgive you: what's past shall be a secret for both our sakes; but I'm resolv'd never more to come into your power; so farewell, and find a better friend than I have been. {Goes out.

Wit. She's loit, and my design upon her, which is yet a greater misfortune to me. [Welv. and Wild. enter to her. O! sir, I am oblig'd to you—and you are oblig'd to yourself for your success with Mrs. *Sightly*; so like a boy, to discover the secret, before 'twas in your power to expose! away, I'll have no more to say to you.

[Goes out.

Wild. So, sir, you have made fine work on't with the women. I thought I had satify'd you in the Mall this morning.

Well. Sir, I must be better satisfy'd than I was in the morning, I find there's no relying upon your word, since, after your promise, never to follow her more, you could excuse yourself to me in the Mall to meet her at the chocolate-house.

Wild. Nay then we have both our grievances, and this must answer 'em. [Going to fight, Court. enters to part 'em.

Court. Fie, fie, friends, and fighting! that must not be gentlemen. Mrs. *Witwoud* has told me the matter; and

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unless

unless you had a fourth man to entertain me, you had ev'n as good put up again: we are all in fault, and all deserv'd to be swing'd for't, that's certain: *Wilding* was a fool for telling you of his design, and I was a fool for talking on't to *Wellvile*; and *Wellvile* no wiser than either, for making such a bustle about it: therefore pray gentlemen let's agree in this opinion, that by our own prating, and prying into other people's affairs, we often discover and ruin one another's designs;

For women are by nature well inclin'd:
Our follies frighten 'em from being kind. [Exit].

A C T V. S C E N E I.

S C E N E Witwoud's lodgings.

Enter Wilding following Witwoud.

Wit. **N**A Y I don't wonder you thrive no better with the women, when you can part with such an advantage over Mrs. *Friendall*: you say you have won a sum of her, which she would not be known to lose: why, another man would take the privilege of a winning gamester, upon such an occasion, to press her to a promise, at least, of coming out of your debt.

Wild. I shall improve, I find, upon the advantage of your hints: but Mrs. *Sight'y*, madam—

Wit. Mrs. *Sight'y* indeed: was that a woman to throw away upon the vanity of being talk'd of for her? In the time you were bragging to other people of being in her favour, you might have been every-where you desir'd.

Wild. Nay, not unlikely.

Wit. I have made all the excuse I could for you; some too, that in my conscience I thought very unreasonable myself; and could pass upon no body but a woman that was easily dispos'd to forgive you.

Wild. If she would but hear what I have to say for myself.

Wit.

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Wit. Nay, she's pretty well prepar'd, but you must not think of speaking to her bare-fac'd, that she can't consent to for her own sake: you have made the matter so public, she has eyes upon her to be sure now: but it happens very luckily, *Friendall* has a masquerade to-night at his house: there, if you please, I can give you an opportunity of clearing yourself to her.

Wild. I ask no more of you.

Wit. Never think of defending yourself, for what's past you were certainly i'th' wrong; and she thinks you so: you know well enough what to say to a woman, that has a mind to believe you.

Wild. How shall I know her at the masquerade?

Wit. Go you, and prepare for't: and depend upon me for your intelligence. [Wilding goes out.] I find I am declining in my reputation; and will bring every woman of my acquaintance into my own condition, of being suspected at least: I have promis'd more than I can do with my cousin *Sightly*; I have lost my credit with her too lately, to betray her in the way of friendship—— let me see——*Betty*——

Enter Betty.

You know where the man lives that made my cousin *Sightly*'s scarf; go to him from me, desire him to borrow it, that a lady may see it, who likes it, and desirea to have one made of the same pattern—— [Exit *Betty*.] I despair of bringing her to the masquerade: I must personate her myself, and meet *Wilding* in her room: but what may be the issue of that? Let what will be the issue: the farther he presses his design upon me, the farther I carry my design upon her: and for once, in order to my revenge, rather than not expose her, I'll venture to grant him the favour, that he may tell on't: and she shall have the benefit of the scandal—— [Goes out.]

S C E N E in St. James's Park.

Enter Lovemore with Mrs. Friendall, and Mrs. Sightly.

Love. Yonder comes Mr. *Friendall*, madam.

Mrs. Fri. Would I were at home again: I came upon

Sigbt. That is, walking *incognito* on this side the Park
 with a man of your character, Mr. Lovemore.

Mrs. Fri. I hope he won't know us.

Sigbt. [They put on their masks.]
 He's too busy in his own affairs.

Love. He comes upon us. I must speak to him.

Enter Friendall.

Mr. Fri. You are provided for, I see: the ladies, I suppose, wish I could say as much for them too: very genteel women both faith and troth: I warrant 'em women of condition, if not women of quality, by their assignation at Rosamond's pond.

Love. You fancy that from the quality of your own intrigue.

Mr. Fri. Why there's something in that too: and the truth on't is, my assignation is with a woman of quality.

Love. Mrs. Sigbly, I fancy, Friendall.

Mr. Fri. Fie, fie, why should you think so? But let her be who she will, if she disappoint me, I'll own it to-morrow to every body——

Love. That she disappointed you?

Mr. Fri. No; that 'twas Mrs. Sigbly I had an intrigue with.

Sigbt. A small matter makes an intrigue of his side, I find.

Mr. Fri. Sure I have seen somebody very like this lady? [Viewing his wife.]

Mrs. Fri. I would not be known for the world.

Love. I'll bring you off, I warrant you.

Mr. Fri. She has the air and mein very much, of a lady of my acquaintance.

Love. Not unlikely, faith: it may be she herself, for ought I know to the contrary: but if you have a mind to be satisfied——

Mrs. Fri. Lord! what do you do?

Love. I have no occasion for her at present: this is my

May woman: she's but an ill-natur'd incumbrance, at this time; and you'll do me a favour to dispose of her.

[*To Mrs. Sightly.*

Mr. Fri. Nay, if you are so free to dispose of her, I'm satisfy'd she is not the woman I took her for: for, to tell you the truth, *Lovemore*, I thought 'twas my wife: and, I gad, I began to be very uneasy; not so much for finding her in your company, as that she should come so peevishly to disturb me, in an affair so very much above her.

Sight. Why, sir, they say your wife is a very fine woman.

Mr. Fri. A wife a fine woman, madam; I never knew a husband that thought so in my life.

Mrs. Fri. But some body else may, sir, if you allow her to make those entertainments for the town, that I hear you do.

Mr. Fri. Gad so, *Lovemore*, pr'ythee bring the ladies to my masquerade to-night; there's no body but people of quality to be there, for pleasure is my business, you know; and I am very well pleas'd, to allow my wife the liberties she takes, in favour of my own; for to tell y^eg the truth, the chief end of my marrying her, (next to having the estate settled upon me) was to carry on my intrigues more swimmingly with the ladies.

Louv. That's a convenience in matrimony, I did not think of.

Mr. Fri. One of the greatest, upon my word, sir. For being seen so often abroad, and visiting with my wife, I pass upon the formal part of the town for a very good husband; and upon the privilege of that character, I grow intimate with all her acquaintance, (and, by the way, there's hardly a family in town, but I can contrive to come acquainted with, upon her account) there I pick and chuse in the very face of their reverend relations, and deliver my billets myself.

Mrs. Fri. You have 'em ready then?

Mr. Fri. Two or three always in my pocket:—[*Shows 'em.*] I write half a dozen in a morning, for the service of that day.

Louv. Hard service, I assure you.

Mr. Fri. Not at all: the letters are but copies one of another; and a love-letter should be a love-letter, you know, passionate and tender, whoever 'tis design'd for. Ha! yonder are two women in masks! I must not be seen with you: ladies, you know when you're well, I suppose, by the choice of your man; make much of him, he's my bosom-friend, and confident of my pleasures.

Mrs. Fri. And you of his, I suppose? there's no pleasure without a confident.

Mr. Fri. Faith, madam, I am of your mind: but Lovemore's a little too reserved, 'tis, at present, his fault, from a want of knowing the town; but he'll mend of it, I hope, when he comes to have a woman worth talking of. Lovemore, not a word at home of seeing me here, as you value the fortune of your friend: adieu. [Goes out.]

Mrs. Fri. Are you the confident of the gentleman's pleasures?

Love. I have not betray'd 'em, madam.

Mrs. Fri. Methinks a friend should have warn'd me of 'em.

Love. I would not be thought to do ill offices, especially in marriage, madam.

Mrs. Fri. I don't think you would; woud Mr. Friendall were as tender of wronging me— [Aside.]

Sight. You have had a handsome account of their expedition: and we are both oblig'd to Mr. Friendall.

Mrs. Fri. I am very well paid for my curiosity of coming here: I suppose we shall have a rendezvous of his wenches at the masquerade, pray let's be ready to receive 'em. [Exeunt.]

S C E N E M^{r.} Friendall's house.

Men and women in masquerading habit.

Enter Wellvile, Wilding, Courtall, Springame, Witwoud, and Betty.

Wit. Wilding has his eye upon us I see: I have something to say to him, in my own person, and then I must change scarfs with you: be sure you are i'th'way.

Well.

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Well. I thought I had known you ; [To Betty.] I beg your pardon, madam, for the mistake.

Betty. You're very welcome to't, sir, I would have you mistaken ; and that you will always be, when you judge upon the outsides of the women.

Well. You are for a stricter examination, I find : there are conveniences for a full discovery, in the next room, some body will show you the way. [Leaves her.]

Wit. That's *Sightly* in the scarf, and *Wauwoud* with her, I suppose ; I must not be mistaken.

Court. I like the freedom of a masquerade, very well ; but it confounds a man's choice.

Spring. Why, faith, I have a mind to be particular, if I could but hit upon the woman.

Wit. And that you shall presently, little captain, I'll put myself in your way.

Spring. Behind a cloud my pretty moon ! [To Betty.] Shall I be the man in you ?

Betty. With the bush at your back-side : you deserve to be whipt for your wit, sir. [Goes from him.]

Spring. I stand corrected, madam.

Wit. Does she beat thee, little master ? Come a'me, and I'll make much of thee——

Spring. As much as you can of me, I dare say for you.

Wit. Come, come, I'll use you better——

Spring. To use me worse ; is not that your design ? She has given me my answer at once ; you perhaps would linger me thro' a winter's expectation, and not do my business at last——

Wit. What's your business, pray ?

Spring. Why your business, any woman's business, that has a mind to employ me in't.

Wit. No touching me : I have an unfashionable husband in the company, that won't thank you for making him a cuckold——

Spring. But you will, I'm sure, if it be but to teach him better manners.

Wit. I like your company extremely ; but I have a great deal of business, and would willingly be rid of you,

at this time; but this ring shall answer for me, 'till I see you again.

[Going.]

Spring. Pray redeem it, as soon as you can.

Wit. Sir, sir, if you have any interest in the family, pray let's have a song, or a dance, to divert us.

Spring. I'll see what I can do for you — [Goes away.]

Wit. You should be *Wilding*.

Wild. And you should be as good as your word.

Wit. The lady is better than you can expect: that's she in the embroider'd scarf. You must not speak to her, before the company; take her aside, by and by, in a corner; she'll thank you for your care of her. Here's more company:

Enter Lovemore with Mrs. Friendall, and Mrs. Sightly.
I won't be seen with you—now *Betty* for the change—

[Wit would and Betty go out.]

Well, Lovemore, I am in disgrace with Mrs. Sightly: And can't find her, to come into favour again.

Love. That's she, that came in just now with Mrs. Friendall: I'll direct you to one, by going to the other.

[They go to 'em.]

A S O N G, written by *The. Cheek, Esq.*

Corinna, I excuse thy face;

The erring lines which nature drew:

When I reflect, that every grace

I'by mind adorns, is just and true:

But oh! thy wit what God has sent?

Surprizing, airy, unconfin'd:

Some wonder sure Apollo meant,

And shot himself into thy mind.

A SONG in the first scene of the fourth act.

Hang this whimsing way of wooing,

Loving was design'd a sport:

Sighing, talking, without doing,

Makes a silly idle court.

Don't

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*Don't believe that words can move her,
If she be not well inclin'd:
She herself must be the lover,
To persuade her to be kind.
If, at last, she grants the favour,
And consents to be undone:
Never think her passion gave her
To your wishes, but her own.*

*After the song, Witwoud and Betty, bawing chang'd scarfs
enter, to be ready for the dance; after which —*

*Lowe. Some can't get husbands, and others can't get
rid of 'em.*

*Mrs. Fri. Every woman carries her cross in this world;
a husband happens to be mine, and I must bear it, as
well as I can.*

Lowe. I would ease you of it.

*Mrs. Fri. No more upon this subject, you have carried
the argument so far, 'tis allowing what you say, to listen
any longer. But Mr. Lovemore, I will give you what
satisfaction I have in my power, and praise is the re-
ward of virtue, you know; I think you have proceeded
like a man of experience in this busineſs, and taken the
natural road to undermine most women. I must do
you this justice, that nothing has been wanting on your
ſide.*

Lowe. I would have nothing wanting on my ſide, madam.

*Mrs. Fri. And however you came by the knowledge
of Mr. Friendall's weaknesses, you have improv'd 'em as
much as they could bear upon the conduct of his wife:
if they have not carry'd me as far as you design'd; 'tis
the fault of my heaviness, perhaps, that can't be trans-
ported into the woman you'd have me.*

Lowe. There's a fault ſomewhere.

*Mrs. Fri. Mr. Lovemore, ſome women won't speak ſo
plain, but I will own to you, I can't think the worse of
you for thinking well of me: nay, I don't blame you
for designing upon me, custom has fashion'd it into the
way of living among the men; and you may be i'th'
ſight to all the town: but let me be i'th' right too to*

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my sex and to myself: thus far may be excus'd: you've prov'd your passion, and my virtue try'd; but all beyond that trial is my crime, and not to be forgiven; therefore I intreat you, don't make it impossible to me for the future, to receive you as a friend: for I must own, I would secure you always for my friend: nay more, I will confess my heart to you: if I could make you mine—

Love. For ever yours.

Mrs. Fri. But I am marry'd, only pity me—

[Goes from him.]

Love. Pity her! she does not deserve it, that won't better her condition, when she may: but she's marry'd she says; why, that was the best of my reasons of following her at first; and I like her so well, as she's another man's wife, I should hardly mend the matter by making her my own. I won't think yet my two months thrown away upon her: one time or other, some way or other, I may be the better for her; at least with some other women: but I begin to believe that every man loses his labour this way sometimes.

Sight. Who can that woman be?

[Observing Wilding and Witwoud.]

Well. Wilding's the man I know.

Sight. Then it may be my good cousin Witwoud.

Well. Presuming upon the scarf, which is very like yours, I ventur'd, and spake to her. I should have known Mrs. Witwoud, I believe.

Sight. Pray try if you can learn who she is.

[They part in a low voice.]

Wit. This place is too public for a vindication of this nature, if you retire into the next room, I may accept of your excuses; upon your promise of good behaviour, and better conduct for the future.

Wild. I'll follow you—

[Witwoud retires; Wellvile to Wilding.]

Well. You will be the man I see, Wilding; the lady's withdrawn; don't let her stay for you.

Wild. Faith, Wellvile, 'tis a fortune thrown upon me; and since it came without my seeking, methinks you should.

should hardly think it worth your courting : she'll bring it about one way or other, you find.

Well. You speak as if I knew the lady.

Wild. I would have you know so much, that she is not worth the honourable care you have of her.

Well. Of whom ?

Wild. As if you did not know her.

Well. Why, 'tis not Mrs. *Sightly*.

Wild. I have declin'd it as much as I could in regard to a friend ; but when she follows me —

Well. Mrs. *Sightly* follow you !

Mr. Friendall enters and joins with Mr. Lovemore.

Wild. No naming names, good *Wellvile*.

Well. Nay, then I must convince you ; I just left Mrs. *Sightly* to come to you ; she's now in the company, and I'll carry you to hear me speak to her —

[*Carries Wilding to Sightly.*

Lov. Why, this was a terrible disappointment.

Mr. Fri. There are lampoons, sir, I say no more ; but I may do myself reason in one of 'em, and disappoint her yet of her disappointment.

[*Among the women fastens upon Sightly.*

Wild. Why then *Witwoud* has put another woman upon me ; and abus'd Mrs. *Sightly* and me : I am satisfied of the cheat, and would be assisting to the revenge of it if I could.

Well. You would not be the instrument to make it public yourself ?

Wild. No, that I can't consent to.

Well. Then leave it to me : *Friendall's* a property fit for our several interests : but *Lovemore* must employ him.

[*Wellvile to Lovemores.*

Mr. Fri. Faith, madam, I am very fit for your purpose, at present, I have met with a little ill usage from a lady ; by not meeting with her : but you may be the better for it, if you please : you shall have the pleasure, and she shall have the reputation of the intrigue.

Sight. I am for all or none. [*Lovemore comes to him.*

Lov. The rarest accident, *Friendall* ; the reason that

you were disappointed in the Park, I can tell you, was, the lady had appointed to meet *Wilding* here: she is now withdrawn into the next room in expectation of him; which *Wellvile*, her old lover, suspecting, has tax'd him of, and ruin'd the design. Now, if you would have me, I'll keep up the jealousy between 'em, and give you an opportunity to go in to her.

Mrs. Fri. By all means, *Lovemore*, this was unexpected, and done like a friend; I owe you a good turn for't, be sure you keep 'em here. [Sneaks out after *Witwoud*.

Sight. What are you designing upon Mr. *Friendall*? [To *Wellvile*.

Well. There's mischief in't; and you may all be the better for't. [Mrs. *Teazall* pressing in with a Foot-man upon the company.

Mrs. Fri. What's the noise there?

Foot. Madam, here's a rude, unmannerly gentlewoman presses in upon me, and refuses to pull off her mask, as your honour order'd.

Teaz. You saucy rascal you, I shew a better face than thy mother had, when she laid thee to the parish, you rogue: prate to me, you varlet! and an honest one, tho' I say it, than any of the company: here's fine work indeed in a civil family! what, are you ashame'd of your doings, that you won't discover yourselves?

Spring. Mistress, you have the natural privilege of a mask. And being disguised in your own face, you may say what you please.

Teaz. Marry, come up here; will nothing but a good face down with you? a woman has a fine time on't, with your finical fancy: but I want leisure to laugh at you. [Looking every where for her niece.

Court. Do you know me?

Teaz. Ay, ay, I guess at you: learn to speak without a question, you fool, before you set up for a wit.

Court. I know you.

Teaz. Why then you may be satisfied, I shall think you an ass.

Spring. Nay, good mother, you had e'en as good pull off your mask. You see you are discover'd.

Teaz. Discover'd, you snotty-nos'd jackanapes! would I could discover your master; I would send him a note of your name: you are not yet clean from school, and are setting up for the women forsooth: you have been so us'd to be turn'd up for a blockhead, that you are for peeping into every body's back-door, to find as great a fool as yourself: firrah, firrah, a good birch rod for your mistress; that would tickle your tail, as you deserve.

Spring. Nay, good your reverence.

Mrs. Fri. What's the matter, pray?

Teaz. Why the wicked ways of living in this town, are matter enough for the vexation of any woman that has a girl to look after: God's my life! can't you keep up your masquerades, in the primitive institution of making cuckolds, as it us'd to be, without bringing the young wenches into the mystery of matrimony before their time? Where's my niece among you? 'tis a burning shame to draw away a poor young girl into these debauch'd galloping doings, as you do.

Mrs. Fri. Good Mrs. *Teazall*, not so censorious: pray where's the harm of a little innocent diversion?

Teaz. Innocent diversion, with a pox to't! for that will be the end on't at laft: very innocent diversion indeed! why, your music-meetings, dancing-meetings, masking-meetings, are all but pretences to bring you together: and when you meet, we know what you meet for well enough; 'tis to the same purpose, in good troth: all ends in the innocent diversion.

Well. Nay, faith, the gentlewoman has reason for what she says.

Teaz. Well, make me thankful for it; there's one civil gentleman among you: and really there's a great deal of comfort in opening a poor woman's case to a discreet, good natur'd gentleman: pray, sir, hear me; and if you don't allow that I have some cause for what I do, I will be contented never to see a coat-card, nor have Pam in my pocket again.

Mrs. Fri. But who are you looking for all this while?

Teaz.

Teaz. An untowardly girl, to be sure, my cousin *Ran-*
ny, madam : she has undone herself, and my hopes of
 a husband for her: gad forgive me, I have no patience,
 when I think upon't: last night, *Witwoud* forsooth, she
 carries her to the music-meeting ; then one *Wilding*, an
 impudent whore-mastering fellow, he carries her home
 with him, which I could forgive well enough too, if it
 ended there : but now, when all things were agreed up-
 on, and Mr. *Bustybun* was to give us a supper, and sign
 the writings, in order to marry her to-morrow ; when
 the baggage was call'd upon, to perform her part, whip,
 she had given us the slip, tuck'd up her tail, and run a
 roguing after that fellow again : but I shall light upon
 her.

Love. Wilding, what say you to this ?

Teaz. O, sir, are you there ? if there be any justice
 in *England* for the women, I'll have you bound to the
 good behaviour ; I'll swear the peace against you my-
 self ; for there's no-body safe, young or old, at this rate,
 if such whore-masters as you are allow'd to do as you do.

Wild. I am bound already to behave myself like a gen-
 tleman : I do what good I can, in my generation ; but
 injure no-body.

Teaz. Sirrah, firrah, you shall find you have injur'd
 my neice, and me, before I have done with you.

Wild. You won't bring it to *Westminster*, I hope, to
 be decided, who has most injur'd her ; I, by being civil
 to her ; or you, by telling it to all the town.

Teaz. Why that's true again.

Wild. And let the company judge, who appears to be
 most her enemy ; I, in teaching her a very good trade ;
 or you, in endeavouring to break her, before she's well
 set up in't.

Court. Nay, now it goes against you. [To *Teazall*.]

Wild. I have put her in a very good way ; if she ma-
 nage it well, she'll make more on't, than her mother
 made of her matrimony.

Teaz. Nay, 'twas the ruin of her, that I grant you.

Wild. And let the worst come to the worst, if she
 fails in this calling, she may begin in another, (as they
 do.)

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do in the city sometimes) 'tis but setting up for a husband at last.

Teaz. But that you won't consent to, it seems.

Wild. Faith, madam, I ha'nt seen your neice since morning; and then Mrs. *Witwoud* obliged me to give over my pretensions to her, upon the promise of procur-ing Mrs. *Sightly* for me.

Sight. Without my knowledge, sir?

Wild. Indeed, madam, you were not to know of the bargain.

Teaz. Then you don't know where *Fanny* is?

Wild. Not I faith, madam.

Well. We were just complaining of Mrs. *Witwoud's* unkindness to you, as you came in.

Teaz. Ay, sir, I am beholding to you.

Well. She has been very busy all this night in carry-ing on an intrigue, between your neice and somebody: they are retir'd into the next room; they went out at that door, if you have a mind to be satisfy'd.

Teaz. I'm sorry, sir, I han't time to thank you for this favour: I must make haste, for I'm resolv'd to be satisfied.

Scene draws, shows Friendall and Witwoud upon a couch.

Very fine! here is a sight indeed!

Wit. Confusion!

Mr. Fri. What a pox! disturb a gentleman's pleasures! and in his own house too! ha! *Witwoud* here! nay then, would you had come sooner: madam, I beg your pardon for some liberties I have taken with your ladyship: but, faith, I took your for Mrs. *Sightly*.

Wit. I never was mistaken in you.

Wild. You see I had too great a respect for you, and therefore provided you a more deserving—

Wit. Fool!

Well. And one that had as good natur'd a design upon Mrs. *Sightly*, as you had yourself.

Teaz. Nay, now, gentlewoman, I think 'tis come home to you, and I am glad on't, with all my heart.

Sight.

88 *The Wives Excuse; or,*

Sight. You have paid dear enough for that scarf ; you may keep it for a pattern for your friends, as 'twas borrow'd for : I won't insult over you, and am only pleas'd that I have 'scap'd your snares.

Wit. That disappointment is my greatest curse ; and disappointments light upon you all. [Goes out.]

Court. This is your mistress, captain.

Spring. And I 'gad she shall be mine now in spight of her teeth : for since I find she can be civil upon occasion, I shall beat her into good manners, if she refuses me.

[Goes after her.]

Well. Every thing has fallen so much to your advantage, that sure the fault I made may be forgiven : what amends I have in my power, I am ready to make you ; my liberty, of what I have to give, is what I value most ; and that is yours, when you consent to let me make you mine.

Sight. This is too sudden to be serious ; when you're in earnest, you won't need an answer.

Wild. They are striking up a peace on all hands, gentlemen ; we shall be left out of the treaty.

Love. There's yet a lady to declare herself.

Mrs. Fri. Mr. Friendall, I'm sorry you thought it necessary to your pleasures, to make me a witness of my ill usage : you know I can, and have past many things, some women would think wrongs, as such resent 'em, and return 'em too : but you can tell how I've behav'd myself.

Mr. Fri. Like a gentlewoman always, madam, and my wife.

Mrs. Fri. The unjust world, let what will be the cause of our complaint (as there is cause sufficient still at home) condemn us to a slavery for life : and if by separation we get free, then all our husband's faults are laid on us : this hard condition of a woman's fate, I've often weigh'd, therefore resolv'd to bear : and I have born ; O ! what have I not born ? but patience tires with such oppressing wrongs, when they come home to triumph over me ; and tell the town how much I am despis'd.

Mr. Fri.

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Mr. Fri. I see we are both disappointed in this affair of matrimony ; it is not the condition you expected ; nor has it the advantages I propos'd. Now, madam, since 'tis impossible to make it happy between us, let us even resolve to make it as easy as we can.

Mrs. Fri. That must be my business now.

Mr. Fri. And mine too, I assure you : look you, madam, your own relations shall provide for you at pleasure, out of my estate ; I only article that I may have a freedom of visiting you, in the round of my acquaintance.

Mrs. Fri. I must be still your wife, and still unhappy.

Lowe. What alteration this may make in my fortune with her, I don't know ; but I'm glad I have parted them.

Mr. Fri. Well, gentlemen, I can't be very much displeas'd at the recovery of my liberty, I am only sorry *Witwoud* was the occasion of it : for an old blown-upon she-wit, is hardly an intrigue to justify the separation on my side, or make a man very vain of his fortune.

Lowe. This you must all expect, who marry fools ; Unless you form 'em early in your schools, And make 'em, what they were design'd for, tools.

{
Extinct.

E P I.

E P I L O G U E,

Spoken by Mrs. Barry.

MY character, not being much in vogue,
Has drawn me in to speak the Epilogue:
But, pray conceive me right, not to disparage
That ancient, English perquisite of marriage;
Which, when the priests first made all pleasure sin,
Faster than they could cheat us, drew us in }
With rites and liberties of cuckolding.
I bat us'd to be the custom, and so common,
No girl but wifb'd herself a marry'd woman.
Whether I've done my husband right, or no;
Most women may be in the right, that do: }
Our author does not set up for reforming,
Or giving hints to fools who won't take warning: }
He's pleas'd, that other people are pleas'd too,
To help to reap that harvest whibb they sow: }
For among all the cuckolds of this town,
Who show themselves, and are as daily shown, }
Our poets may make some of 'em their own.
You find in me what may excuse a wife:
Compare at home the picture with the life, }
And most of you may find a Friendall there; }
And most of you more justly us'd than here: }
Our author has his ends, if he can show, }
The women ne'er want cause for what they do: }
For, ladies, all his aim is pleasing you. }
Some mettled sparks, who nothing can withstand, }
Your velvet-fortune-bunters, may demand, }
Why, when the means were in the ladies band, }
The husband civil, and the lover near, }
No more was made of the wife's character? }
Damn me, cries one, had I been Betterton, }
And struts, and cocks, I know what I had done; }
She should not ba' got clear of me so soon. }
You only fear such plays may spoil your game: }
But flesh and frailty always are the same: }
And we shall still proceed in our old way, }
For all that you can do, or poets say.

THE
MAID'S LAST PRAYER;
OR,
ANY, RATHER THAN FAIL.

A
C O M E D Y.

As it was Acted at the
THEATRE ROYAL,
By Their MAJESTIES SERVANTS,
In the YEAR 1693.

—Valeat res ludicra, si me
Palma negata, macrum : donata reducit opimum.

HOR. Epist. I. lib. 2.

TO THE HONOURABLE

MR. CHARLES BOYL.

SIR,

HERE is no condition can subsist wholly upon itself: and I am bound to depend, as every man, more or less, is, upon the favour of the world, to carry him through the troublesome journey of this life; nor do I think it my misfortune to wait upon a great man's rising sometimes, to put him in mind of me. While I can keep myself out of the necessity of flattering fools, I shall not very much repine at my condition. I'm sure I'm safe here, because you are safe every where: and when a common consent encourages an opinion, I shall hardly be thought in the wrong, to do as other people do.

Sir, when poetry becomes a man's business, it will hardly prove another man's diversion, though a play once a year, looks very like turning into the profession, I am a little better acquainted with the town, than to impose myself this way upon them; and let it be the defence of my writing, that I have nothing else to do.

I know

I know play-writers, like men of other employments, where the honest advantages are so small, are suspected in their dealings, of indirect, underhand practices, to carry on their trade. For my part, sir, I propose nothing more than an opportunity of declaring myself in my turn, that I have grown up by degrees, with the general understanding, and judgment of the town, into a respect and honour that every body has for you: this, sir, is the only way I have of publishing mine: and writing has always been allowed of, when there was no other way left of discovering the passion.

Some convenience, and a great deal of pleasure, first carried me into this wanton way of wickedness, (those old seducers, profit, and pleasure) that have brought at last a great many of both sexes, into the common entertainment of the town.

I have had my ends of this play, and should have been glad if it had answered every bodies: I think it has its beauties, though they did not appear upon the stage, and it is not the smallest commendation, to be able to divert you in private.

If I run into the course of a dedication, I shall be lost in the character of Mr. *Boyl*; for when I have said all I can, I shall fall short of every man's opinion; and no body, but yourself, will think I can say enough of you: at home, or abroad; in the camp, or in the court, Mr. *Boyl's* behaviour, and address, is the pattern of every gallant man's imitation; so much, that, from what I have seen, and heard of you, I must believe that there is no province
of

of humanity, but, at one time or other of your life, you are designed to command. Let it satisfy, sir, your present ambition, to conquer in the fairest field of victory, to triumph in the court, and in spight of the cabals, and whispers of the drawing room, to be universally allowed the fine gentleman : which as it seems the easiest, has always been thought the hardest character of a great man to maintain.

Sir, since the distance of your quality and fortune, has made it impossible to come near you, as a friend, I hope you will allow me to wait upon you as,

SIR,

Your real humble servant,

T. SOUTHERNE.

PROLOGUE:

Spoken by Mrs. BARRY.

TH E Y who must write (for writing's a disease)
Should make it their whole study how to please :
And that's a thing our author fain wou'd do ;
But wiser men than he must tell him how :
For you're so changeable, that every moon,
Some upstart whimsy knocks the old ones down.
Sometimes bluff heroes please by dint of arms ;
And sometimes tender nonsense has its charms :
Now love and honour strut in buskin'd verse ;
Then, at one leap, you stumble into farce.
Like true fanatics, never long content
With any settled form of government :
Eager in choice, as eager in forsaking ;
You first blaspheme the gods of your own making.
Let poets henceforth lay their rules aside ;
And take some ruling planet for their guide ;
No more frequent their fam'd Parnassus' tops ;
Unless it be to place their telescopes :
For such as hope to merit your esteem,
Must quit their Horace, and erect a scheme.
Thus they may find a way to please the pit,
Provided they insure their plays from wit.
Our author, this way doubtful of success,
(For some men have no stars, as Lilly says)
Himself, and play, upon the boxes throws,
From perfect beauties. to imperfect beaux.
To you, fair sirs (for I must call you so,
Since art, in spight of nature, makes a bear)
Who in side box, in seeming judgment sit,
Like barron tell-clocks to attend the pit ;
In all humility be does submit.
Not that he needs to doubt you for his play :
We know your courage lies another way.
Nor will he court you, like some servile elves,
Who flatter you as much as you yourselves :

Let

*Let them proclaim the conquest of your looks ;
That bug-bear word shall never burn his books.*

*You, ladies, be adores, and owns your charms,
More powerful than the greatest monarch's arms.
Hopes the kind heav'ns will all your wishes grant,
Whether they be for husband, or gallant :
Nay, Bath, and Wells, at once, if both you want.
Not doubting your good-nature for a man,
Who, to oblige you, does the best he can.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

GRANGER,	Mr. Powell.
GAYMAN,	Mr. Bowman.
GARNISH,	Mr. Alexander.
Lord MALEPERT,	Mr. Doggett.
Sir RUFF RANCOUNTER,	Mr. Bright.
Sir SYMPHONY,	Mr. Bowen.
Captain DRYDRUBB, married to SIAM,	Mr. Underbill.
JANO, Page to Lady SUSAN,	Betty Allinson.

W O M E N.

Lady MALEPERT,	Mrs. Barry.
Lady TRICKITT,	Mrs. Bracegirdle.
Lady SUSAN MALEPERT,	Mrs. Montford.
MARIA,	Mrs. Rogers.
WISHWELL,	Mrs. Betterton.
SIAM, an Indian Woman,	Mrs. Leigh.
FLORENCE, Woman to Lady TRICKITT,	{ Mrs. Kent.
JUDY, Woman to Lady SUSAN,	Mrs. Rachel Lee.
CHRISTIAN, Maid to WISHWELL,	Mrs. Perin.
BETTY, Maid to SIAM.	
Footmen, Porter to Sir SYMPHONY's Music-meeting.	{ Mr. Pinkyman.

SCENE, London.

THE

MAID'S LAST PRAYER;

OR,

ANY, RATHER THAN FAIL,

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE, Trickitt's House.

Enter Gayman and Granger from Play.

GRANGER,

APPOX ON YOUR basset: catch me at that damn'd game this twelvemonth again, and may I live to value myself upon the modish reputation of a gentile tallieur.

Gay. And that has made a fortune before now.

Grang. It never shall make mine: death! I have no patience to be eternally jilted by *Alpheus*—

Gay. But not the ladies *Granger*.

Grang. The ladies? there lies the secret: when you design a bank, you first consider what beauties you shall get to draw in custom: and I cou'd tell you, as a certain lord did, when ask'd, why he never play'd at my lady *Pampockett's*.—

Gay. As how, pray?

Grang. Why, since you press me—I don't like your women.

Gay. Sure you forget my charming lady *Trickitt*; and that's inhospitable in her own house.

Grang. No, faith, I have her in my thoughts, a fresh idea of her, and her little cheats; her nauseous toils, and all those affectations that ought to make a woman odious to men of sense.

Gay. Gad-a mercy, St. George for England! now wou'd your man of travel and true dress be transported with what your right-born *Britain* finds such fault with; and think these little agreements of absolute necessity to make a mistress relish.

Grang. To make a mistress relish! to make a mistress stink of the familiarity of half the town: I must own my want of good breeding; the hogo's much too strong for me.

Gay. Thou monster of ingratitude! I heard this very woman, within this month, say, there was not so agreeable a man in town as Mr. *Granger*; so generous a friend, and so good-humour'd a gentleman, especially upon a winning hand.—

Grang. Why there's the devil on't: one night, about that time, she lost her money, and I was lucky: she, to my face, cried up the generosity of those who make their friends partakers of their good fortune: and I was too well satisfied with mine to contradict her: next morning she sent to speak with me, on earnest business, which was to borrow five hundred guineas, promising to repay me with such a grace, that no one who had not the honour to know her ladyship, cou'd have had the heart to refuse her.

Gay. And how cou'd you retire like a man of honour?

Grang. I told her mine was a younger brother's fortune; not to be ventur'd but on good security; she indeed kindly preffer'd me the best she had about her—

Gay. And so you sign'd and seal'd?

Grang. No, faith; without advising with counsel, I knew

knew 'twas so incumber'd with fops and blockheads, there was nothing in remainder for a reasonable man: there's not a rogue so nauseous, but is welcome to her for his money: all that will be losers, lenders, or givers, have an equal claim to her good graces: from the grinning stinking lord, to the fat booby 'squire, whose unsavoury vapours wou'd offend the ladies noses, in any ruel but her ladyship's.

Gay. But what say you to my lovely lady *Matepert*? she's more particular, one man at once suffices there.

Grang. Wou'd it were always to be her husband — That a woman at eighteen, an age when love and pleasure us'd to rule, shou'd in the midst of plenty, value herself upon the reputation of a publican, and always sit at the receipt of custom! rot her, she has less mercy than a mountebank's bill: no cure, no money, is a moral honesty in the surgeon; but no money, no cure, is only the conscience of a whore.

Gay. Prejudice of education, *Granger*: her inclinations may be good, and *Wifswell's* influence over-rule 'em: she governs there, and interest governs her.

Grang. Nay, Mrs. *Wifswell's* the very flower of modern industry, and shews a master-stroke in all she does: first, to insinuate, at her age, into the inclinations of this young lady; then, with her character, to persuade the family she was a fit instructor for her; and, which is more, to make lord *Loffy*, tho' tern'd of fifty, agreeable to almost fifteen.

Gay. But above all, to break the league 'twixt her and her lord's aunt, my lady *Susan*, who tho' a friend to the projection, cou'd not endure to have it brought about by any but the family.

Grang. Yes, that youthful virgin of five and forty, with a swelling rump, bow legs, a shining face, and colly'd eye-brows (of what breath she pleases) sure she's an original: 'tis the most familiar duck, always engag'd a month before-hand: she'd no more miss a ball, than the curling her little finger when she eats, tho' she hobbles worse than *Abigail* in the *Scornful Lady* when she has broke her crupper.

Gay. No matter for all that, I am oblig'd to her.

Grang. O yes, by having the honour to be your bawd, she thought to recommend herself to be my mistress.

Gay. Despising her, as you do, why are you so often with her? Your visits are as regular as my young master's to the crooked heirefs, whom his prudent parent has pick'd out to be the future blessing of the family.

Grang. Why, to confess my sins, and blush for all at once—— since I refus'd *Trickitt* the five hundred pounds, I don't know what the devil's the matter with her, but she has made me some advances, that have put me into a curiosity of knowing the meaning of 'em. But, damn her, while I believe her endeavouring to persuade me that she is in love with me, I think I am in love with her: I can't see to the end on't: but she, and my worthy lady *Susan*, being as you know, inseparable, I need explain no farther.

Gay. Speaking of *Trickitt*, as you have always done, I durst have sworn of her whole sex she was the last in your opinion.

Grang. And so she is,

Gay. And yet you follow her.

Grang. I consider the principles of a mistress no more than of a good companion, they are both the instruments of pleasure for the time, and to be trusted with nothing beyond that meeting.

Gay. But can you love without esteem?

Grang. Why, you court lady *Malepers*; you can have no real esteem for a woman of her mercenary character.

Gay. Cou'd I reclaim her I shou'd be happy: at least the trial will be pleasant.

Grang. How does this agree with your passion for *Maria*? can you be false to her?

Gay. She won't let me be true to her: I have try'd her every way but one; and that one way, that highway of matrimony, 'twill come to at last, I believe.

Grang. I always thought *Wishuell* your friend in this business.

Gay. The lord has got the better of me; yet I will visit

visit her again, to get her into my interest if I can ; if I fail in that, I shall at least have the pleasure of railing at her.

Grang. Nay, never think of curing the mercenary itch in an old woman ; 'tis the very tetter of that sex ; and more or less breaks out upon 'em all : the young ones are not clear on't.

Gay. Here comes the noble lord *Malepert*, and that mirror of chivalry, *Sir Ruff Rancounter* : their conversation shou'd be diverting, let's stand back and observe 'em.

Enter Sir Ruff, Lord Malepert banging upon his arm.

Sir Ruff. *Granger*, methought, us'd your lordship a little scurvily : I wonder you cou'd bear it ; for my part, I always make mince-meat of any fellow that offers but half so much to me.

Ld. Mal. Pish, he lost his money, and I teaz'd him ; these things are nothing between us : besides, I am witty upon him in my turn, I call him wasp.

Sir Ruff. Nay, I must allow you are too hard for him at repartee ; but a man of honour, my lord, shou'd never put up the least indignity : you never see him offer the like to *Gayman*.

Ld. Mal. Who ? *Gayman* ? Lord ! he's the servilest fellow, the ministers do so laugh at him.

Sir Ruff. Why, he'll fight, my lord.

Ld. Mal. O Jesu ! sir ! I never said any thing to the contrary : he's a very worthy person ; I always reckon him among my best friends, whatever I say of him. I assure you he did all his exercises at the academy to a miracle : he and I rid the great horse together.

Sir Ruff. The great horse, my lord ? Sure you forget yourself, your lady's pad went a great way with you.

Ld. Mal. Why, really, *Sir Ruff*, you won't believe me ; but I became the manage so well, that I verily believe I had been in the army but for one thing.—

Sir Ruff. What was that, pray ?

Ld. Mal. Why, they said riding too much wou'd teach me to turn in my toes, and spoil my dancing ; and

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you know a body wou'd not do that for less than a re-
giment, and they offer'd me but a troop. Was you at
the play last night?

Sir Ruff. Yes, what of that?

Ld. Mal. Was *Wifswell* there? Well, she's the best
woman.

Sir Ruff. You have cause to say so.

Ld. Mal. Yes, really, she's always so particular to me:
I have seen her so play upon my lord *Lofty*, when he was
much a greater man than I.

Sir Ruff. Has not she play'd for him too, my lord?

Grang. This blockhead will tell him, he's a cuckold to
his face. [Aside.]

Ld. Mal. Well, my wife's mightily oblig'd to her.
She's admitted to her toilet, when she's abroad to du-
chesse; then she gave her the handsomest present of stuffs on
board an *East India* ship; *Lofty* had but just given it her.
I am to have a gown and slippers of it myself.

Grang. Yes, and a night-cap too. Can this puppy be
so blind, not to know who made his wife that present?

Sir Ruff. When was you at Mrs. *Siam's*?

Ld. Mal. Last night, at ten; we railied there; lord
Lofty, *Wifswell*, my wife, and I: my wife sent me home
for more money: but before I came back, where do you
think they were gone?—Why, even to *Wifswell's*,
where we had the prettiest supper: after we arose from
table, *Wifswell* took me aside, as she us'd to do, to rail
with her, at the vices of the age; I thank her, she knew
which way to oblige me—

Grang. And the whole company.

Sir Ruff. Why, after all, this was no compliment to
my lady.

Ld. Mal. Why, lord! *Sir Ruff.* you don't think we
left her alone: we were better bred, I assure you: my
lord and she went into the little room, with the crimson
couch, to talk of state affairs: now you must know my
wife understands state affairs to a miracle: she picks up
all the news of the drawing-room, to inform me of at
night; for her whole business, you must know, is to make
me rise—

Grang.

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Grang. Out of bed from her, I believe you. [Aside.
Gay. Wou'd she had a better employment. [Aside.

Sir Ruff. To make you rise ! 'tis lost labour very often
my lord ; for, after all, you don't look much like a man
of business.

Ld. Mal. O Lord, sir ! you're mistaken in me ; I love
state affairs mightily ; and understand 'em, tho' I say it,
passably well : why, I had a politic master all the while
I was in *France* ; without vanity, I got off a sheriff this
winter, in spight of the commissioners.

Sir Ruff. Was not *Maria* with you at *Wistbawill's* ?

Ld. Mal. Ay, ay, *Maria*, came in and interrupted us ;
Maria came in——a lady of your acquaintance,——as
good'a maid, tho' I say it——

Sir Ruff. Though you say it ? What can you say of
her ?

Ld. Mal. Why, thou hast such an aking tooth after
that maidenhead of hers ; but she won't marry you : be-
sides, she has no maidenhead.

Sir Ruff. Has your lordship no coxcomb ?

Ld. Mal. Why, what do you mean, *Sir Ruff*? I never
was ask'd such an uncivil question in all my life. Jesu !
mayn't a man make a jest, or so, upon a friend, in a civil
way ?

Sir Ruff. Not where my honour, or the honour of my
mistress is concern'd.

Ld. Mal. Pish, I honour her as much as you do : I
think her virtuous, let the world say what they will of
her.

Sir Ruff. Will that repair the injury ? Damme, *I'll
have satisfaction, or I'll wring your neck off.

Ld. Mal. Help there ! treason ! I am the lord *Malepert*,
seize him somebody——but, dear *Sir Ruff*, I meant no
harm in the world ; but as I love railing mightily, I can't
forbear a witty jest sometimes——

[*Granger and Gayman come forward.*]

Sir Ruff. Damn your dull jest : —this place and
company protect you, and so adieu, lord *Loggerhead*.

[Exit.]

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Ld. Mal. Mr. Granger, Mr. Gayman, your servant; were you at the Park last night?

Gay. Was your lordship a hunting with the king?

Ld. Mal. Jesu! I a hunting? No, God forbid. You have the prettiest trimming, Mr. Granger: did you buy it at the French protestant's?

Grang. That's a question for my taylor.—Who was he that left you just now?

Ld. Mal. Honest Sir Ruff. Does the queen see company?

Grang. He us'd your honour something coarsely, I thought.

Ld. Mal. Pish, 'tis a pleasant blustering fellow, I allow him all his humours, and he knows mine.

Grang. It seems he does.

Ld. Mal. Now you must know I am very quiet and good-natur'd 'till I am vex'd, but then I'm the devil.—

Gay. At twelve I'll meet you in the Park.

Grang. Stay, stay, we'll go together.

Ld. Mal. Did you lose to-night, Mr. Granger?

Grang. Did your lady sup at Mrs. Wifswell's?

Ld. Mal. Pish, did you win then?

Grang. Did my lord *Lefty* sup there too?

Ld. Mal. Very foolish; were you a saver then?

Grang. Zounds! did you leave 'em alone? That's the way for you to be a winner.

Ld. Mal. Well, my wife does so laugh at him when we're alone; she's only civil to him because he's a relation. She says his conversation's so out of fashion, and if he shou'd pretend to make love—

Gay. She wou'd make very good sport with him.

Grang. I dare swear for her.

Ld. Mal. Yes, I vow now, for I assure you she has a world of wit, as my aunt *Susan* says: she'll play upon me sometimes before company; but that you know is the fashion—

Grang. What, to play upon your lordship?

Ld. Mal. Pish, no, I mean to use a husband negligently in public; but then she's so fond of me in private; nay, faith, our humours jump to a hair, she'll raise

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a miracle, and you know I love railing mightily—But do you resolve to quit basset?

Grang. Damn it, 'twas invented by the levellers, and suited to all capacities; 'tis the devil and all to lose always to fools.

Ld. Mal. I always lose too; but witty men, you know, are seldom lucky.

Grang. I must to my lodgings; send some rouleaus to the bank, to pay my damn'd debts, and learn to be wiser for the future: shall I have your honour's company?

Ld. Mal. Jesu! Mr. *Granger*, I beg you ten thousand pardons; I covet no man's company so much as yours; but I must go to Sir *Feminine Fanvile's*, drink tea at *Siam's*, and then to the levees of three privy counsellors.

Gay. You're a necessary man to 'em.

Ld. Mal. Why, really, bar Sir *Feminine*, there's not a man in town carry's 'em fresher news.

Grang. Nay, he's a prodigy of intelligence.

Ld. Mal. And very well with the ministry, upon my word: no matter who's in play, he sticks to the offices, and not the men; there's not a word spoken in the play-house, chocolate-house, or drawing room, but he gives 'em an account of.

Grang. You forget the coffee-houses.

Ld. Mal. O filthy! he leaves them to such as can endure the stink of tobacco: no, he's too delicate for that, and I believe nothing less than the betraying the secrets of a bosom friend, cou'd persuade him to speak to a man that came out of one. I went to him from visiting an old aunt, that was taking a pipe: the smoke, I believe, got into my perriwig, but he smelt me out immediately, and made his valet de chambre turn me down stairs, I must say that for him: nay, I vow he's an extraordinary fine gentleman, and knows a fool, as well—

Grang. As your lordship.

Ld. Mal. Yes, I vow now, does he: gad so, 'tis almost eight o'clock, so dear Mr. *Granger*, and Mr. *Gayman*,

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man, your servant: you'll be at my aunt Susan's this af-
ternoon; 'tis her day you know..

Gran. Gay. Infallibly, my lord.

[Exit Ld. Mal. one way, Granger, Gayman, another.

S C E N E drawn, shows La. Trickitt, Maria and Gar-
nish making up the bank, cards scatter'd about.

L. Tric. What luck's this child? To win of Sir Lim-
ber Lowly, and my lady Sinker, (both desperate debts)
lose all our ready money, besides a sum to *Granger*.

Maria. Did Mr. *Granger* win? I came in late, you
know.

L. Tric. Upon my life, child, we owe him a hundred
and fifty pounds.

Maria. I take your word, madam; but indeed I
thought he had been a loser, I am sure he fretted at the
usual rate.

L. Tric. You mistake him, child, 'tis his humour; he's
as hard to please as a sick monkey; and when he is, it
sits as awkwardly upon him as a French suit on a young
Spaniard, newly set out to travel.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. *Granger*'s man's to wait on your ladyship.

L. Tric. Tell him I'm gone to bed, bid him come
after dinner, and the money shall be ready—[Exit Serv.
He's strangely pressing; methinks he might have stay'd
'till next basset—Now if this fellow be fool enough not
to understand me, and shou'd bring in the money, all
will be discover'd. [Aside.]

Servant returns with three Rouleaus.

Serv. Madam, he says, Mr. *Granger* gives his service
to your ladyship, and has sent you the hundred and fifty
pounds he lost to the bank.

L. Tric. Well, this fitting up does so prey upon the
memory: why, I durst ha' sworn he ow'd that sum:
well, child, as't happens, this is no ill night to thee.

Garn. Thanks to the timely message— [Aside.]
Maria.

Maria. They come so seldom, but Mr. Granger's the most punctual man.

Garn. He's every way a man of honour.

L. Tric. So waspish, there's no living with him : of all things he's my aversion.

Garn. I must be better satisfy'd of that, before I believe you. [Aside.]

Maria. He's sometimes splenetic indeed, but 'tis thro' so much good sense and breeding, 'tis rarely seen, and always diverting.

L. Tric. Dear *Maria*, how can you say this ? did you ever know him offer at a civil thing ? no, 'tis an arrant churl : and for the honour you mention, Mr. *Garnib*, he talks too much of it, to have more than his share.

Maria. I'll not dispute his character with you : shall we meet anon at my lady *Susan*'s ?

L. Tric. I'll not fail you, child, she's one of the gang.

Maria. I take my leave. [Exit.]

L. Tric. Adieu, *Maria*, adieu dear child—Why what a credulous creature this is !

Garn. Lord, madam, how can you impose so upon your friend ?

L. Tric. Tell me of friendship ! no, as my lord says, there's no true friend but money —

Garn. How, madam ?

L. Tric. And yourself. But let us get as much money as we can ; 'twill secure your friendship to me.

Garn. It cannot need such a security — Well, madam, you have reconcil'd me to some things — for your service.

L. Tric. And for your own, good sir.

Garn. That I cou'd never have thought on, for myself.

L. Tric. And you have persuaded me to another thing.

Garn. For both our services.

L. Tric. That I wou'd ha' done for nobody else.

Garn. There's no repenting of any thing I can do, for you, or with you ; I am a slave to all your interests, employ

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ploy your cunning, I'll assist your arts; cheat all your
friends but me.

L. Tric. Cheat you?

Garn. Has Mr. *Granger* done any thing to make him
your aversion? you won't allow him to be a man of ho-
nour; have you a mind to put him to the trial? When you
refuse a man a commendation that every body gives him,
you must pardon me, if I think, 'tis for some private
reason of your own: besides, I never knew a woman de-
clare an unreasonable aversion for a man in public, that
had not a mind to have a better opinion of him in pri-
vate.

L. Tric. What, you are jealous of him?

Garn. Not jealous, madam: but 'tis a weakness to be
too secure; while I tally'd to the company, I had my
eyes about me; and indeed by what you look'd, or did,
or said to him, I cou'd not find out your aversion.

L. Tric. A very boyish jealousy indeed! he lost to us,
and I was civil to him; nay, civil to his losses, not to
him: I can do no more to serve the common cause, so
certain to our interest—

Enter Florence.

' *Garn.* I do believe you can do what you please; and
I'll watch your pleasure— [Aside.]

L. Tric. Is your lord stirring yet, *Florence*?

Flor. He has been in his dressing-room this half hour,
madam.

L. Tric. Then 'tis as I wou'd have it; and a fair time
for me to go to bed—I come— [Exit *Flor.*]

Garn. Shall we meet this afternoon?

L. Tric. Not this afternoon, I have busineſs; hardly
this week I fear: I hope I've ſatisfy'd your jealousy.
You don't know enough of me— [Exit.]

Garn. I do know enough, enough to ſatisfy me; there's
no knowing more than ſhe has a mind to:
And all the knowledge our weak ſearch can find,
But proves, there is no knowing womankind. [Exit.]

A C T

ACT II. SCENE I.

Wishwell at her Toilet with Christian.

Wifb. PR'ythee leave fidling, 'tis well enough.

Cbrisf. Madam, you wou'd have your things fit handsomely.

Wifb. Decently, I wou'd ; what you call handsomely, is a niceness, wou'd as ill become me as asultana does a fat body, or a high commode a lean face ; and only serve to make my decays more remarkable.

Cbrisf. Will you please to use the wash—

Wifb. I use the wash ! a woman turn'd of fifty was ne'er design'd to be look'd upon : I may wash, and patch, and please myself ; cheat my hopes with the daily expence of plaster and repairs ; nobody will take the tenement off my hands. Men use us as we use our spectacles, to draw the object nearer to the sense : indeed we are the fittest means to guide and light their dark designs home to their ends on younger women. No matter for the character ; I live by them, and they shall love by me. While I am mistress of *Malepert's* beauty, I am not very sensible of the loss of my own : for her sake I will be courted : I have so many how-d'ye's, and invitations in the morning upon her account ; so many visits in the afternoon ; and so many bows in the drawing-room at night.

Cbrisf. For her sake you have so many rafflings, and whoever throws most, you win the prize : for her sake, my proud lord *Lofy*, who scarce bows to heaven, cringes to you ; and for her sake the whole town calls you bawd. [Aside.]

Wifb. Time has been, when by the merits of my own face — but —

Cbrisf. I had almost forgot, madam, Mrs. *Lucy* was here this morning, and desires you to remember Mr. *Oglswill* of the Temple.

Wifb. She may rest herself contented, he is not for her turn :

turn: Mrs. *Siam* sent her maid to his chambers yesterday in the afternoon too; his man deny'd him at first, but afterwards confess'd, his master was in bed with a fine gentlewoman (one of the common, fine things of the town—I suppose) and wou'd not be disturb'd.

Christ. How, madam! pretend to marry Mrs. *Lucy* for love, and be in bed with another!

Wifb. Nay, now he'll hardly marry for love, since he has found a remedy for love without marrying.

Christ. Base man! does not he fear a judgment will follow him? had it been a match, I was to have fifty pound of her, for putting your ladyship in mind of it..

Wifb. And did the fool believe I wou'd turn match-maker in my old age?

Christ. Why, madam, 'tis no such dishonourable character.

Wifb. But 'tis ridiculous, and that's worse: no, give me an office, where I may have thanks for what I do: go, get the chocolate—and remember I am at home to nobody but lady *Malepert*. [Exit Christian.] 'Tis near the time she was to call me for the *India* houses; she turns to more account, than any of my former acquaintance: she has hitherto been rule'd by me; and I will keep her out of those gentlemen's hands, if I can, who, by engaging her, as deep as they can, into their interest, will certainly, as soon as they can, take her out of mine. If I may believe her, nobody but lord *Lofty* has yet been happy: he grows weary of presenting; and must give place to gamesters that bid more: Sir *Ruff Rancounter* offers very fair: while I can keep her to men, where she can like nothing but their money, I am safe; therefore that brute shall have her: but *Gayman* loves her; she likes him too; and when the parties are so far agreed, there's but a little work for a third person to bring 'em together. I fear *Gayman*, as I shou'd a *French* privateer in the Channel without a convoy, and all my fortune on board one vessel: for he's a master of those thriving arts, and little rogueries, that cheat and please the women: then to his person, wit, and industry, he has a certain respect.

respectful impudence in his behaviour, few women can find fault with, or resist.

Enter Christian.

Christ. Before I cou'd give your orders to deny you lord *Lofty* was told you were at home.

Wif. This must be by *Malepert's* appointment. Wait on him up. [Christian goes out.] But now he's out at court, he shall soon be so with her—How! Mr. *Gayman*!

Enter Gayman.

Gay. 'Tis well you nam'd me, madam; by the strangeness of your look, I was afraid you had forgot me.

Wif. I am surpris'd you shou'd use another name to be admitted here; where I command you shall always be welcome.

Gay. I was sure the name I borrow'd wou'd carry me thro' this family.

Wif. Your own can do as much.

Gay. Then 'tis since his disgrace is for, not three days ago, when you deny'd yourself to every body, and to me, among the crowd of your unfeastable visitors, my lord *Lofty* and lady *Malepert* were notoriously above stairs with you; above stairs, in private with you; with you or without you.

Wif. How, Mr. *Gayman*! notoriously at my house?

Gay. Why, yes faith, madam, it was very notorious; and you were so little cautious of concealing it, their pages were at play all the afternoon before the door: it made a jest for every body that went by; and wou'd have been apprehended by the very blind cuckold himself, had he happen'd in the way.

Wif. 'Tis very well, sir; now you show yourself.

Gay. Why, faith, I can't help it; I must show myself upon these occasions; 'tis every honest man's cause and duty to be concern'd to find the best things so abus'd; to see a young lady's pleasures fall so soon into the contempt and scandal of the town, thro' indiscretion or mis-

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mismanagement: I don't tax you of either: but the world—

Wifb. I defy the world—

Gay. The flesh, and the devil too, good madam: but they'll get the better of us all.

Wifb. And you, the worst of devils. What of the world?

Gay. Why people, you know, are apt to prate: and when a woman of experience, as you may be, engages in these affairs, the world expects a conduct suitable to your grave character: all the miscarriages of an intrigue are laid on you; the lovers are call'd fools, and you have a worse name.

Wifb. I see you come to rail; I laugh at you.

Gay. I came to make you merry; laugh with me, if you please; we'll laugh at other people—while he was in favour, I grant you, he might be a friend; and there was reason good for serving him—But I know you are truer to the interest of the drawing-room, than to think any man, that's in disgrace, can be a friend—Since my good lord is down, ev'n let him lie; another man may rise out of his fall—You can't want friends: I have a hard-hearted father must die at last; and then I can be what you think a friend, able to come up to your price of thanks: come, not to get a habit of, do a generous thing, and let me once speak well of you.

Wifb. Very well.

Gay. Come, come, I'm in the secret, and therefore fittest to be trusted now: the lady's an out-lying deer; I know you have been accessory to some of her 'scapes already; and can help her over the pale upon occasion again, to serve a friend, Mrs. *Wifswell*.

Wifb. We are both beholden to you.

Gay. If I am not to be oblig'd to her upon your account, 'tis but staying 'till my betters are serv'd, and then, as you manage matters, every man may hope to have her in his turn.

Enter Christian, and goes out.

Cbriſt. Madam, my lady *Malepert's* coming up.

Gay.

Gay. How, madam !

Wifb. To hear how kindly you can speak of her.

Gay. Forgive what I have said ; my fortune, interest, life, and all you shall command.

Wifb. I would command your tongue. [Wishwell receiving *Lady Malepert.*] Thou charming creature ! be for ever thus, thus dear, thus young, thus ever killing fair !

Lady. Dear *Wishwell*, I fear I have tir'd thy patience.

Wifb. Doting to this degree, I needs must languish : but now I have you thus —

Gay. Flattering devil !

[Aside.]

Lady. My passionate gallant !

Wifb. That title you may allow me, without injuring your lord —

Gay. There the question hangs.

Christian enters, and whispers Wishwell.

Lady. How ! Mr. *Gayman* ! you're a stranger here.

Gay. I'm sorry for that, madam ; I am every where an humble servant of your ladyship's.

Wifb. Would the devil had her for coming so unseasonably : I can't avoid leaving 'em together : but the opportunity shall do him little good : — your ladyship will allow me a minute, and I'll be with you again —

[Goes out.]

Gay. That minute must be mine : and let that minute tell you, what all my life can ne'er enough explain, how much I value you. I won't believe 'tis from your own design that I'm thus us'd : I know I've enemies, but will not think you can be one of 'em.

Lady. I ne'er can be your enemy.

Gay. O, no ! they're outward all, not near this tender breast, and most unworthy to possess your heart ; that heart, which once you said was wholly mine.

Lady. And was not that a fault ?

Gay. It was, to break your word.

Lady. Why did I say so ?

Gay. Because then it pleas'd you, to speak a truth that

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that charm'd me to be yours; and yours I must be, use
me as you will:—but being yours.

Lady. Why did I meet you here?

Gay. To tell me where I next shall meet you.

Lady. Why will you press me thus to what will ruin
me?

Gay. With *Wishwell*, I would have it— [Aside.]

Lady. If you can think it fit—

Gay. There's nothing fit without you.

Lady. At *Siam's*, this afternoon, we raffle there.

Gay. I raffle for a heart—

Wishwell enters with Siam.

Lady. Mrs. *Siam*, you're in your round of visitation,
I see.

Siam. I joy to find yeer ladyship here: I have the
sweetest things; I have 'em in the next room to shew
you. Good lord! Mr. *Gayman*! how come you here?
Whoever's the better for your company, I'm sure I shall
have no reason to thank you for't, at this time.

Wife. Nor I neither, pox take him— [Aside.]

Gay. Why, what's the matter, pray?

Siam. The matter! why, a jealous, old, coxcombly
fellow, (that ought to be a cuckold, if I had woman-
hood enough about me to make him one) is matter
enough for all the misfortunes, that can call upon a wo-
man of my public employment.

Gay. What! my noble captain *Drydrabb*, your hus-
band?

Siam. Ay, ay, the noble captain, as you call him: would
he were a captain now, to be commanded into *Flanders*,
that I might hope to be rid of him: but I'm ev'n well
enbugh serv'd, I must have a soldier, with a pox to him:
a man of honour, as he calls himself, to command me:
one that has out-liv'd the memory of being a corporal,
in the civil wars; and has borrow'd the title of a cap-
tain, only to run in debt with.

Gay. He's man of honour enough, to be jealous it
seems.

Siam. Yes, yes, he's jealous enough to be a man of
honour.

honour, if that will make him one : but he's jealous of himself, I suppose, and his own honour ; and that makes him jealous of me, and mine : but I've a plaguy life with him, that's the truth on't ; he follows me all over the town, dogs me wherever I go : all this live-long morning he has been at my heels : he says I run a gadding after the fellows, and if he finds out my haunts he swears he'll pepper me : now if he has seen your servants at the door, the whole world shall never persuade him but I came upon an assignation with your worship ; and 'twill hardly be in the power of a guinea to make him quiet again.

Lady. Poor *Siam* ! I vow she has a dismal time on't.

Siam. A dismal time on't, indeed, if your ladyship knew all ; but for God's sake, Mr. *Gayman*, as you tender the reputation and quiet of a poor woman, that have been younger in my time, be so kind now —

Gay. Well, Mrs. *Siam*, I will be so kind.

Siam. Else this overcharg'd blunderbus will have the impudence to come in, and let fly among the ladies.

Gay. I'll deliver you this time from his jealousy ; I am a slave to the interest of your sex : — your servant, ladies —

[*Exit.*]

Siam. Well, this Mr. *Gayman* is a civil gentleman in appearance, and that's as much as a lady can desire in a young man : truly I'm oblig'd to him — shall I bring in the stuffs, madam ? They are the newest things ; I'm sure they'll please your ladyship.

Lady. Some of your stale ware, *Siam*.

Siam. Upon the faith of a christian, madam, they never saw this side of the world yet ; they're just out of the *India* house, and never were open'd to any one, but this morning, to my lady *Kill-Chairman* ; she indeed is my very good customer, and bought four pieces of 'em for a mantua.

Lady. For her whole family sure, four pieces !

Wifb. We'll look upon 'em in the next room, if you please — But, *Siam*, what have you done about our raffle ? Are there subscribers enow ?

Siam. I want but one, madam ; I have got a very honest

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next generous gentleman to make one, Sir *Ruff Rancour*; if he wins, he'll scorns to carry any thing out of the company; some of the ladies will be the better for him. Leave these things to me: the men I provide for you, at my house, shall be men of honour, I assure you, and for the purpose you design 'em. [Exit.

Lady. What purpose can such a beast, as *Rancour*, be design'd for among the women?

Wifb. Why, like a beast, bear the burden of your expences upon your pleasures. None but such beasts will bear 'em: think on that.

Lady. I hate him.

Wifb. I would not have you love him: love yourself, and then you you'll love nothing but your interest. Come, come, a thousand pounds may answer for the man: 'tis but suffering a little of his company; and why not a little of his, as well as more of your husband's? They're beasts alike: only this, in proportion, bids more to be receiv'd by you. Then he can do you no injury, either in your quiet, or your fame: for you can no more be in love with him, (which is a great blessing in these affairs) than the town can think you ever allow'd him to be in love with you; and is not a thousand pounds a round sum, for doing so little, and suffering nothing?

Lady. But why should I do any thing against my inclinations? I don't want the money.

Wifb. Madam, madam, every woman wants a thousand pounds: and for your inclinations, if you allow them to get the better of you, you are undone; there are a great many pretty gentlemen to be had; but what will you get by any of 'em in the end? Just so much experience, and repentance for your pains: you may be in love with a man, that has it in his temper to be in love with half the town; as all the young men are. And how will it agree with the pleasure of your pride, or the pride of your pleasure, to be forsaken? No, no, no love: we'll learn that of the men —

For love is nature's appetite diseas'd:

Where we have no concern, we're always pleas'd. [Exit.

S C E N E

SCENE St. James's Park.

Enter Sir Ruff meeting Gayman and Garnish.

Sir Ruff. Did you see lord Malepert?

Gay. What! must it be a tilt, *Sir Ruff?*

Sir Ruff. No, no, hang fighting among friends: I have other business for him; of another nature, gentlemen; I make love to his wife.

Gay. How? how? pray recollect yourself,

Sir Ruff. Nay, not that I think her any better than her chambermaid: 'tis the woman does my business, and not the lady: I had rather have a prudent practiser of the trade, to use as I think fit; than a gentlewoman (that only does it now and then, for her diversion) to use me as she pleases. But, you know, a man in this town is no-body, without the reputation of a quality-intrigue: and all that I do for it, is to talk of in company; and be better respected by the women: for you know, they generally judge, just as other women have judg'd before 'em.

Garn. But if the intrigue be only on your side?

Sir Ruff. Sir, I would have you to know, 'tis on her side too: *Gayman*, thou art a pretty fellow, and shalt be my confident: there's no living without communicating matters of this kind, to have both parties the better for 'em. But, Mr. *Garnish*, to convince you, the husband's strangely fond of me, and you know, that always proceeds from the good opinion of the wife.

Gay. I may make use of this.

Sir Ruff. But besides, I have made madam *Wise-well* my friend: it costs me money indeed; but she takes the troublesome part off my hands: she makes love for me; I'm only to stand by what she says: she sends me word, we are to raffle at *Siam's* in the afternoon.

Gay. But, my lord and you are fall'n out.

Sir Ruff. That's no matter, if I could meet him.

Enter

Enter Lord Malepert.

Garn. Here he comes, ready for your purpose.

Sir Ruff. Give me thy hand, dear bully; faith, I'm sorry you provok'd me to use you so untowardly.

Ld. Mal. Really, Sir *Ruff*, and so am I, with all my heart; I meant no harm, I vow and swear: if I had not thought you my friend, I would not have pretended to be witty in your company: but, faith and troth, yet were bloody angry.

Sir Ruff. Come, come, shall we dine together?

Ld. Mal. With all my heart; upon condition you'll go with me to *Siam's* in the afternoon.

Gay. Nay, that's but reasonable—— [To *Sir Ruff*.]

Sir Ruff. Then be it so; I'll go along with you.

Ld. Mal. Well, *Siam's* the best woman in the world: she's the rarest company, and has all the news. Then she's so fond of me, that I verily believe I spend above a thousand a year at her house.

Sir Ruff. Nay, faith, then you have reason.

Ld. Mal. I vow, I should be the worst man in the world if I did not love her, she has done so handsomely by my wife.

Gay. As how, pray?

Ld. Mal. Why, she heard a noble lord, and a great man at *Whiteball* fay, he was in love with her: and what do you think this good creature did?

Gay. Why, pray perhaps, that she might resist the temptation.

Ld. Mal. O foolish! pray? no, quite contrary: she came to her next morning, and told her of it; that she might be sure to avoid him.

Garn. No doubt, that was the reason.

Gay. But, my lord, you are not there so often as you us'd.

Ld. Mal. Why since her marriage, the house is turn'd upside down: what do people marry for, bat to live easy with every body? when there's no danger of a rival. Methinks a man should think every one his friend: I'm sure 'tis the maxim of my family.

Gay.

Gay. It should be the maxim of every man, that's born to your fortune, my lord.

Ld. Mal. But the old captain, you must know, has got it into his head, to be jealous of me; and is grown so troublesome, he can't endure a witty man should come into his doors.

Garn. You have given him cause, my lord.

Ld. Mal. Nay indeed, if Mrs. *Siam* was to be had, I believe I stand as fair for her as any body: but I never had the least dishonourable thought of her; never saw any thing bare of her, above her knee: an inviolable friendship I must own for her: I love her mightily.

Gay. I thought there was something in't.

Sir Ruff. Ay, ay, no doubt on't. But we shall lose our dinner.

Ld. Mal. Nay, I wou'd not lose my dinner for more than I'll speak of, at this time: my wife is very regular at her meal: if I chance to lose a meal, she says, I an't my own man again in a week after.

Sir Ruff. Nor your wife's neither, my lord; come, let's be gone. [Exit *Ld. Mal.* and *Sir Ruff.*]

Gay. 'Tis almost one: *Granger* said he wou'd be here.

Garn. That friend of yours, is a pleasant, snarling fellow, and a good companion: 'tis pity he's so very peevish.

Gay. He has a thousand good qualities, but they have all a tang of his testy humour, that shows itself in all he says and does: like a drop of oil left in a flask of wine, in every glass you taste it.

Garn. Here the gentleman comes to answer for himself.

Granger enters with a footman.

Foot. Sir, my lord commanded me to tell you company dines with him, and he desires you'd please to be there.

Gran. Well, well. [Exit Footman.] Zounds! a man had as good be ty'd to a stake, and baited like *Tom Dowe* on *Easter Monday*, as be the necessary appurtenance of a great man's table; they make me as much their own, as if I were part of their side-board.

VOL. II.

G

Garn.

122 *The MAID'S LAST PRAYER; or,*

Garn. What's the matter, Mr. *Granger*?

Gay. Why in such a passion?

Gran. Passion! why they use me as if I had none about me. They won't let me be my own man twenty-four hours together!

Garn. That's hard indeed; but pray who does encroach upon your liberty?

Gran. Who? why who shou'd dare; but they who may do any thing: here's the new favourite summons me to dine with him: he sends me word there will be company; and, I suppose, designs to serve me up as part of the entertainment.

Gay. Now wou'd many an honest fellow be proud of this invitation, and think his fortune made by it

Gran. Why, I have known many an honest fellow proud of the pox; but my ambition does not lye that way, nor my inclination at present; but thither I must go, tho' I was engag'd to my Lord *Lofty*.

Garn. Will he admit of no excuse?

Gran. No, plague on it, his messages are like subpoenas: I may stay away, if I think fit; but I shall pay a swinging fine for my contempt.

Gay. 'Tis not a month since he was in your favour, and *Lofty* cou'd not get a word from you.

Gran. And 'tis not yet a fortnight since he was mean enough to accept of an employment, and *Lofty* had the soul to part with three.

Gay. Sure, *Granger*, thou lovest a nodding wall, that will bury thee in its ruins, tho' it never gave thee shelter while it stood: as no one was the better for *Lofty*'s greatness, methinks it shou'd be difficult to be concern'd for his disgrace; I'm sure I'll condole with no man that wou'd never give me cause to rejoice with him.

Gran. He mended every day.

Gay. No faith, he kept up his character to the last; and had his politics and honesty been put into the scale, the balance had been even.

Gran. This is ungenerous.

Gay. 'Tis what you have said of him within this month, and still the man's the same.

Gran.

Gran. If you must rail, let the new favourite be the subject.

Gay. Why, what's his fault?

Gran. Why, he's a favourite; that will make faults, if it find none.

Gay. You may distinguish the man from the favourite; he's ne'er the worse for having it in his power to do good offices: besides his company's good; his table easy; and, *Granger*, he has always been a friend to you.

Gran. A friend to me! a tyrant. Has he not carried me about like *Bajazit*, and made me talk too? Zounds, does he take me for a parrot? the bird deserves his meat, and cleaning of his cage, that talks for it. You, who love the company and tyranny of courtiers, much good may do you with it: for my part 'tis a hell to me, and I'll keep out on't as long as I can——

Enter captain Drydrubb.

Capt. Do'st talk of hell, old boy? there's a parson in the bottom on't I believe: for there's no hell, no purgatory, no devil, but of the clergy's providing. What, thou hast married some old libidinous gentlewoman?——

Gran. Not I, indeed, sir; I have occasion sufficient to be out of humour, without having a wife, young or old, to provoke me: you must guess again.

Capt. Not I, sir, I shan't guess again; you may have it for the keeping, if you won't tell us what's the matter with you: but you say you're a whoremaster?

Gran. Not I, sir.

Capt. Not you, sir! why, may be then you are not so honest a man; but if you are not a married man, you must be a whoremaster; and why you shou'd be out of humour, who carry all the women before you, I can't tell: cuckoldy husbands indeed, that come after you, have something to provoke 'em: grant us patience, I say.

Gay. Why how now, captain?

Capt. Why how now! ha! are you there, sir? Can't all the town suffice you, sir? but you must be running after my domestic, ferreting in my borrough?

Gay. I, captain?

Capt. Yes, you, no captain: for all your cunning, I have found out your haunt, your meeting-place: will no less a bawd than Mrs. *Wishwell* serve your turn? but I see the ambition of the boy; by *Pompey*, I smoke you: why, what an impudent fellow are you to think of making a cuckold of a captain? Did you ever hear of a captain that was a cuckold, sir? 'twas in the parliament army if you did, that I can tell you. A parliament captain might be a cuckold indeed; but 'twas because he had not the king's commission to protect his wife then.

Gran. There were some cuckolds in that army, I believe, who made use of their horns to toss the cavaliers out of the kingdom.

Capt. But I was always on the king's side—

Gran. Beaten?

Capt. Beaten? ay, sometimes beaten, sir: 'tis no such wonder for a captain to be beaten, I hope. But I'll not be a cuckold, sir, not be beaten by a distaff, a wise: have I brought my honour from *Edgbill*, both the *Newburys*, and *Marlton-Moor*, nay, and from *Worcester* too; to lose it in an Indian house? then fortune is my foe.

Gay. Faith, captain, your honour's safe for me; but I cou'd tell you—

Capt. What can you tell me, sir? I know enough already; and more than I care to know.

Gay. Why, I could tell you who attempts your honour, if you had temper to hear me—

Capt. Temper to hear you! why I'm as temperate a tom-titt; as mild as *May*: pr'ythee tell me, good boy, who?

Garn. Nay, now you're engag'd in honour to tell him.

Gay. I am loath to make a division among friends, but I must acquit myself; and truly I have observ'd some winks, and passing familiarities, between lord *Malepert* and your wife.

Capt. Nay, I thought there was no good towards, in his coming so often to the house; but does that sniveling

king pea-chick think to make a cuckold of me, who have seen all the service of Christendom, from the meeting the Scotch army at *Coldstream*, to the merry meeting at *Hunslow Heath*?

Gay. Nay, I have seen Mrs. *Wifbwell!* carry whispers between 'em.

Capt. I'll demolish, by *Pompey!* I'll break her windows, and turn over my old punk to the sessions, to answer the battery: but for that beardless, shambling, wheyfac'd—The are to raffle at our house this afternoon: This is *Wifbwell's* design to bring 'em together; but I shall part them with a clap of thunder, by *Pompey*.

Gran. Well said, old Baskethilt.

Capt. Yes, faith, I'll swinge 'em: I remember your dammee-boys, your swashes, your tuquoques, and your titire-tues: have us'd the fleece, and speering's: thrown clunch at a whole table, where half of 'em wore velvet patches: had drank my tun of brandy, before this puleing puppy's father tasted milk. I'll ransack 'em, by *Pompey*.

Garn. Can we assist you, captain?

Capt. Not that I care what any man can do with the old jade: But I won't be a cuckold in my old age, gentlemen; I won't be a cuckold: I can make a thrult still —fa—fa—

Gay. All vigour to the stump!

Capt. And, by *Pompey*, they shall find I am.

Gay. Will you dine with us, captain?

Capt. Dine with you! you must lend me a guinea then, one little guinea; or I must go home to the old *Jezebel*, and compound for a cuckoldom, by staying abroad as long as she pleases.

Gay. Here's that shall prevent it. [Gives him guinea.

Capt. God-a-mercy, boy! by *Pompey*, now the day's again our own: we'll go, and cherish ourselves with a good dinner, some wine, and much *Nants*.

And then resolv'd for war, we'll boldly try,

Who beats up my wife's quarters, he, or I. [Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE lady Susan's lodgings.

Enter lady Susan, Maria, and Lord Malepert.

L. Su. COME, dear Maria—
 Mar. You ladyship's lodgings are so neat!

Ld. Mal. Siam and I fancy'd all the furniture : we ran about to shops three days together ; I love running about mightily.

L. Su. True, nephew, you paid coach-hire ; but I vow, Maria, 'twas every bit of it my own fancy.

Mar. 'Tis very well fancy'd : and every thing in such order !

L. Su. O law ! you know 'tis my day ; and then Mr. Granger and the rest of 'em will certainly be here.

Ld. Mal. Granger's a wit ; he and I are very great ; and I love a wit mightily.

Mar. Well, madam, you're oblig'd to Mr. Granger.

L. Su. O Jesu ! but, dear Maria, tell me, when, where, and how ; I long to know.

Mar. Last night at my lady Malepert's.

Ld. Mal. Yes, I vow, and my wife frump'd all the while, and did not say one word.

L. Su. Well, go on, dear child, I'm impatient—

Mar. He said you were the only lady in the town that understood behaviour and good breeding.

L. Su. O law ! and did he ?

Ld. Mal. Yes, I vow, our family was always remarkable for good breeding.

L. Su. Dear nephew, don't interrupt her : well, dear child—

Mar. He said experience had ripen'd you to woman—

Ld. Mal. Yes, I vow, my aunt was five and forty last *Lammas*.

L. Su. Nay, nephew, know when to hold your tongue : come, Maria—

Mar. But that of all things, he despis'd those unfledg'd creatures,

creatures, the town calls beauties; a company of unexperienc’d girls, ‘without the knowledge of conversation, in which your ladyship excell’d.

Ld. Mal. Nay, my aunt can talk as much as the best of us.

L. Su. O crimine! this was strangely obliging.

Mar. Then he said you had the sweetest page; and he was always dress’d so prettily—

L. Su. Poor dear *Jano!* and did he like the child? he shall see him in his night-gown

Ld. Mal. But you forget, *Maria*, he said happy the man that were in that child’s place; and sigh’d so filily—

Mar. Then looking scornfully at all the ladies—

Ld. Mal. Yes, and upon my wife too; I assure you, she took it bloody ill of him.

Mar. He swore no lady had charms like yours, nor set ‘em off so well—

L. Su. He has not seen me in my new mantua yet.

Mar. Then rav’d on your complexion; and for your eye-brows—

L. Su. O law! I hope he knows nothing of them.

Mar. They were the strings of *Cupid’s* bow; your eyes the only arrows.

L. Su. And did he say all this?

Mar. Yes, and laugh’d at you.

[*Afside.*]

Ld. Mal. Yes, I vow, did he, and really ‘twas very foolish—

Mar. To see how out of counteance we were to hear it.

Enter Jano.

Jano. Madam, Mr. Granger and Mr. Gayman are coming up.

Ld. Mal. Lord! what shall I do?

Mar. What, afraid to be seen with your aunt?

Ld. Mal. No, I vow now, I an’t afraid: but I wou’d never have my wife know it for the world tho’.

L. Su. Well, nephew, go into my closet; there’s *lettices* upon the japan table for you.

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Ld.

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Ld. Mal. What, the book with pictures!—ay then, 'tis well enough; I'll go in, and divert myself. {Exit.

L. Su. Divert himself! Jesu! did you ever hear such an unseemly expression before ladies?

Mar. Unseemly, madam!

L. Su. O law! child; but, dear *Maria*, pull down my mantua; they're just a coming.

Enter Granger and Gayman.

L. Su. Mr. Granger, Mr. Gayman, your humble servant.

Gay. I never saw any thing so pretty as your ladyship's sconces.

L. Su. You're so obliging: and how do you like 'em, Mr. Granger?

Grang. As they are your ladyship's I must admire 'em.

L. Su. They were made in France, I assure you, by madame's own workman—Child, bid my woman set chairs— [Mrs. Judy sets chairs.]

Grang. Wou'd we might have her company instead of the ladies.

Gay. Your ladyship's woman's very pretty.

L. Su. And has a world of wit, I assure you.

Grang. There's nobody so much set off by a handsome woman as your ladyship.

L. Su. O law! that's particular— [Aside.] But, Mr. Granger, do you think her pretty?

Grang. By reflection from your ladyship.

L. Su. Still particular— [Aside.] Mr. Granger, shall I beg a word with you? [They all rise] 'Tis business; I hope the company will pardon me.

Gay. What an affected doating fool's this? How can you bear her?

Mar. I must be civil to her for the sake of her relations.

Gay. You'll be at Siam's about five.

Mar. I'll not fail.

Gay. I'll ask for you— [Aside.]

L. Su. Never to be forgiv'n—[To Granger aloud, and laughing.] But, Mr. Gayman, have you seen the stuff a

Sian's there are three or four the sweetest pieces : I bought the red and silver for a night-goon.

Gay. 'Twill certainly become your ladyship.

Grang. Pinks and lilies : exactly her complexion.

L. Su. O law ! sir ! well, I wonder Trickitt is not come yet ; I have not seen her almost these two hours : but, Jesu ! there's a coach stopp'd ; I hope 'tis her's.

Jano. 'Tis my lady Trickitt's ; she's just landed.

L. Su. Landed ! pray mind, Mr. Granger, how prettily he expresses it ; he says she's landed.

Grang. Proper, and apt indeed, were it out of a kennel.

[*L. Trickitt, aloud from the bottom of the stairs,*
answer'd by lady Susan, Trickitt enters.

L. Tric. Su—

L. Su. Trickitt—dear, dear creature !

L. Tric. Dear, dear Suki !

Gay. How the monkies cling together !

L. Su. Well, Trickitt, this was barbarously done, I vow and swear now, neither to see me, nor let me hear from thee in two whole hours : as I hope to breathe now, I was just going to write thee a scolding letter.

L. Tric. Nothing but business, and my lord's commands could have preveated me.

Enter Garnish.

L. Su. Mr. Garnish, your servant.

L. Tric. O, Mr. Garnish ! you can tell us : does Sir Symphony bold forth to-night ?

Garn. He'll tell you himself immediately, madam : I met him at the end of the street ; and he told me he had bot five visits to make in his way hither, and wou'd be with you in an instant.

L. Su. Well, I vow, 'tis a civil gentleman.

Grang. You speak of him with some concern, madam.

L. Su. Who, I, sir ? No, I vow, a filthy unmaunerly fellow, and if he had not the fiddles, now and then, wou'd be good for nothing. I abhor him, I vow I do.

O law ! what had I like to ha' done ? [Aside.]

Grang. Your ladyship and lady Trickitt design to be at his music. I hope notwithstanding this aversion ?

L. Su. What ! on my day ? Jesu ! Mr. Granger, what do you take me for ? Yet I love music to an extravagance, I vow now ; but the world, Mr. Granger, what woud the world say ?

Grang. You're above their censure, madam : the receiv'd opinion of your good breeding will justify your ladyship in any thing.

L. Su. Jesu ! Trickitt, how Mr. Granger mistakes the matter ! 'tis not that I fear to commit an error in good breeding, not I, I assure you ; but if I shou'd be so light, to go to public places, when all the world is sensible 'tis my day, they must needs think 'twere an assignation ; and that for a lady of my quality — —

Enter Sir Symphony.

Sir Sym. Ladies, your most obeysant servant : I'm come to you with an invitation from the Muscs ; all the world have promis'd me the honour of their company ; and yet if I am refus'd your ladyships, I shall think my house a solitude.

L. Su. You can have no company of mine to-night, sir — — I must use him scurvily before Mr. Granger, else he may be jealous ; and I woud not have 'em quarrel here for the world. [Aside.]

Sir Sym. Cruel creature ! but is there no hopes, madam ?

L. Su. Nay, sir, pray be quiet ; lord, can't you let a body alone ? Pray what have I to do with your hopes ? Really, Mr. Granger, this fellow is a forward impertinent sot, so he is.

Grang. I hope, madam, his forwardness does not proceed from any encouragement you have given him ?

L. Ju. Jesu ! sir, I give a man encouragement !

Grang. I only speak my fears, madam.

L. Su. You're so obliging, sir — — [To Granger.] Well, this is past dispute. [To herself.]

Gay. What have you there, Sir Symphony ?

[Looking on his Table-book.]

Sir Sym. Why, this is a catalogue of the ladies I visit, egle, and say soft things to ; seven and fifty, widows, wives,

ANT; RATHER THAN
wives; and aside: and if I don't succeed
you, I have been a civil person to little
Gay. I'll follow you immediately—
Mar. I'll take my time—

Enter Jane.

Jane. Madam, Mrs. Brattle has sent her
ladyship to carry her to the
night.

L. Su. How prettily the child deliv-
[Kisses him.] Pray kiss him, Mr. Gran-
sweekest breath; this will give an opportu-
my kiss. [Aside.] You are mightily
Granger, child, you should make him
then; but, child, present my service to him
to pardon, or rather pity my misfortune
day free 'till Tuesday sennight; and then
she may command me—But hold, ch-
Trichit and I intend to go to shops, an
day long on Monday, not one shall 'scare
fat girl in St. Martin's-lane, (where we
at nine exactly) to the embroidered prin-
she's for a frolic, child, we shall be glad
[Ex. Jane.] This is a hint for Mr. Gran-
sare of him—Well, don't you think
world of wit?

Sir Sym. She's a most exquisite lady, a

L. Su. I did not ask your opinion, sir.

Sir Sym. I find I am unfortunate to
walk off with my disgrace, in hopes of b-

L. Su. But your opinion, gentlemen, a

Gay. She says a great deal, madam—

L. Su. And very well to, I vow and f-
what say you, Mr. Granger?

Grang. Faith, I think she's all talk, an

L. Su. O law! why she plays at little
rake.

Grang. The blind horse is fitest for the

Garn. She's a lady of great acquaintan-

Grang. Nay, she's the universal crook of the sex ; not a female from thirteen to five and thirty can be a week in town without a visit from her, which makes her very convenient to her male relations.

L. Su. O law ! Mr. *Granger* ! I vow I believe her as virtuous as myself ; but then she sings, and plays upon the virginals so sweetly, and dances country dances.

Grang. Nay, doubtless she has all her motions to a miracle ; and for *Joan Saunderson* —

L. Su. O law ! Mr. *Granger*, you're so strangely s'terrific : I believe you laugh at us all behind our backs.

Grang. Fools I laugh at to their faces : but such as your ladyship —

L. Su. O Jesu ! Mr. *Granger*.

Grang. Wit, beauty, and good breeding, madam, command respect.

L. Su. Well, he's strangely obliging — What, leaving us already, Mr. *Gayman* ?

Gay. Business calls me from my pleasure, madam. [Exit.]

Grang. I'm sure there's something in't —

[Observing Trickitt and Garn.]

L. Su. Mr. *Granger*, you are melancholy o'th' sudden, are you not well ? will you have some of my milk-water ?

Grang. My fever's in the spirits, madam.

L. Tric. Nay, there's something extraordinary ; we all observe a change, sir.

L. Su. I'll lay my life he's in love, child. [Aside.]

L. Tric. I hope he is, to be reveng'd of him.

L. Su. Well, is it so, Mr. *Granger* ?

Grang. In company, like this, 'tis difficult to live without a passion — [Applying it to Trickitt.]

L. Su. Well, this is a plain declaration. We must not force him to a confession ; 'twill press his modesty too far, I vow now. [Laughs.]

Garn. The confession's but too plain ; tho' she mistakes it. [Aside.]

L. Tric. Why so sullen, sir ?

Garn. Have I not cause ?

Ld.

L. Tric. You mistake it, but I shall find a time.

[Leaving him.]

Gars. I shall find it for you.

[L. Susan and Trickitt whisper.]

Grang. We interrupt the ladies. Let's take the hint, and leave 'em—— [They go out.]

L. Su. O law! gentlemen, I beg a thousand pardons: What gone! well, I am so glad I have thee to myself: child, if company comes, I have the head-ach, and am laid down—— [Exit Page, and returns.] I have a secret of prodigious importance to tell thee; well, 'tis for the men's misfortune to judge amiss: but what if Granger shou'd be in love?

L. Tric. Wou'd that be an error in his judgment?

L. Su. O law! you take me wrong: but what if he shou'd love a friend of yours? Well, I'll keep thee no longer in suspense; he has a good estate, besides his place, and I'm confident you wou'd not be against it.

L. Tric. What! a good estate?

L. Su. O crime! I see I must be plain with thee: but did you observe how civil he was to me?

L. Tric. 'Twas his good breeding.

L. Su. But from a man that's thought morose——

L. Tric. 'Tis a sign of a clear sky; no clouds to raise the spleen.

L. Su. In short he loves me, and has e'en as good as told me so: and I vow and swear I design to let him know his passion is not unsuccessful: I have a plot upon him: my pretty little Fans shall visit him, as of himself, the child shall give him my song, and tell him, all the servants say, he's in love with me, and that you know will force a declaration.

L. Tric. No doubt, child.

L. Su. Well, we shall so laugh: and then you come to visit my lady Susan Granger——and then I return thy visit, and your servant tells you, my lady Susan Granger's page has sent up word his lady's just a landing from her chair——and then say, your ladyship's, my dear, is the prettiest equipage in town——and then I say——well I shall

I shall be so happy: for Mr. Granger resolves to eat in plate.

L. Tric. Has he told you so?

L. Su. Jesu! no; but then he laughs at all the fools; and will bring me home the lampoons: but I must instruct the child; come hither *Jane*; pr'ythee, my dear, pardon me a little.

L. Tric. That my very good friend shou'd be so blind! she'll be something long in her instructions; I'll into the closet—how! *Suky!* [Looks in, and starts.] A man asleep in the closet? [Page goes out.]

L. Su. O law! I vow and swear now, 'tis my nephew—He was here before the company came, and you know since our quarrel, his wife won't give him leave to come to me. Well, I wonder at her irregular fancy in love, and friendship: how can she endure an antiquated *Lofty*, while there's a youthful *Gayman* to be had? or make a confidence with such a creature as *Wiffewell*, that's past the taste of a partie quarre?

L. Tric. Why, my lord, lord *Malepert*.

Enter Lord Malepert frightened, and rubbing his eyes.

Ld. Mal. O law! aunt! what's the matter? Why did you leave the doct unlock'd? I'm sure I made the back-door so fast, that Mrs. *Judy* cou'd not get in, for all she had a key: and I thought you had been old enough to look to your fore-door yourself. I'll swear, if I had thought you wou'd serve me so, I wou'd ha' gone down the back stairs, let the footmen have said what they please, so I wou'd. But, good madam, not a word of seeing me here.

L. Tric. Well, trust you to my discretion.

Ld. Mal. Nay, as for your discretion, madam, I know you: you have discretion enough to win all our money, I'll take your word for any thing but an alpieu.

[*Exit Lord. Mal.*]

L. Tric. Well, dear *Suky*, adieu—nay no ceremony—

L. Su. O Jesu! can you be my friend, and desire I shou'd be so unbred—

L. Tric.

L. *Tric.* You disoblige me eternally, if you stir a step farther.

L. *Su.* To obey you my dear —— [L. Trickitt goes out. Well for all 'tis my day, Judy and I will go masqued to Sir Symphony's —— Trickitt, Trickitt —— Gads'me, I have forgot half my business with her — I must go in, and write her a letter, before the child comes back —— [Exit.

S C E N E changes to Granger's lodgings.

Enter Granger and Garnish.

Garn. This is but an ill return, Mr. Granger, for she's a great admirer of your's.

Gran. Pox on her, she's so obliging : and takes such pains to inform me of what I don't care to know.

Garn. She calls you her dull Amintor, and says, for a well-bred person, you are certainly the most modest creature breathing : She knows you're in love with her, and has given you a thousand opportunities to declare your passion, which your respectful bashfulness has still prevented you from laying hold of.

Garn. From laying hold of ! I am for laying hold of nothing he has about her, unless it be pretty Mrs. Judy ; no, no, she speaks too plain to be understood : She may be in earnest, upon this subject, to herself ; but she will always be a jest to me. Not but I shall put her to the right use.

Garn. Not the use you think of, if I can help it.

[Aside.]

Gran. What's the business ?

Enter servant.

Serv. Sir, my lady Susan Malepert's little page, is below, and says he comes to make your honour a visit.

Garn. Bring him up : does she send her ambassador already ? she has scarce had time to draw up his credentials : pr'ythee step into my dressing-room, while I give audience : [Garnish goes in.

Enter

Enter page.

My little *Ganymede* ! thou'rt welcome ; this was kindly done.

Jano. But if you shou'd tell my lady, she'd never forgive me.

Gran. How do you know, child ?

Jano. She told me so ; for she knows nothing of my coming.

Gran. Indeed, child ?

Jano. No indeed now : nay, and if you shou'd tell her, I say she talks kindly of you ; she'd kill me, so she wou'd.

Gran. No sure, child, she cou'd not have the heart.

Jano. Yes indeed, she bad me say so : and then I must not give you this song, unless you promise to give't me again ; for she said a fine lady of quality writ it, upon a very good friend of yours.

Gran. But I may take a copy ?

Jano. She said nothing of that, I believe you may.

Gran. When will lady *Trickitt* be with your lady, child ? [Granger writes and talks.]

Jano. She's with her two or three times every day : and then the servants say your honour loves my lady, and intend to marry her, and be our master.

Gran. That were too great an honour for me, child : does not lady *Trickitt* send for thee sometimes to sing to her ?

Jano. I go there by-and-by : but my lady will be so impatient to know what your honour says ; for indeed she does not a know a word of my being here.

Gran. That's a good child : but thy lady's a fine accomplish'd lady ; I dare not presume to think of her. But here's the song again ; my friend shall write an answer.

Jano. And shall I tell my lady so from your honour ?

Gran. She knows nothing of the matter, child ; but here's a guinea to buy cherries, and be sure you call on my lady *Trickitt*, in your way home, and give her this : and if you bring me an answer, I have another guinea in

in my pocket for you : so, that's my good child, thy lady will want thee.

[Exit page.]

Gerr. Well, sir, what news from the lady?

Gran. Nothing extraordinary ; she has play'd the fool, and writ a song, as most people do, that are in love ; pray read it, 'tis all her own, I assure you.

S O N G.

*P'r'ybee, my dear, do not be so peevish
To her, that takes thy part :
Albo' thy eyes, and thy tongue so thievish,
Have stole away her heart.*

*For know my dear, it is I that love thee,
Most passionately :
And if thou'lt do as it doth behove thee,
I'll thank thee heartily,*

*Then, pr'ythee dear, let me know the morning,
When thou and I shall wed :
For I, by that, shall guess the evening
When we shall go to bed.*

Gran. Tender and passionate ! a very just conclusion !

Gran. Shall we look into the play ?

Gerr. I'll wait on you — Till I know the success of your letter.

[Exeunt.]

S C E N E changes to Siam's house. Captain Drydrubb playing on his cittern, singing.

*Once I lay with another man's wife,
And I lay in a great deal of danger :
But now I have gotten a wife of my own —*

And so I have, by Pompey ! and here must I, to get a solitary guinea, now and then, to keep up loyalty, with a cup of cordial Nants, be forced to fee a parcel of que-fac'd puppies come perking and pruning after my dama'd jade ; pox on her, can't she sell off all her foolish trumpery at once, and set up an honest sociable cellar, where

where a gang of generous, old, crimson-gilded, grumblin' cavaliers, may take a pipe and a quartern, and my honour never to be concern'd?

[Siam comes forward.]

Siam. Nay, pr'ythee, good captain, the company will be here in a wink, as a body may say: can't you go take a civil walk in our fields, and leave me to carry on my occupation?

Capt. Occupation, with a pox to you! what, must I be turn'd out from under my own roof, to make room for a company of strutting cocking coxcombs? to help to carry on your occupation! ounds! I'll not stir a foot: I'll see who dares command, where I am master, I will, by *Pompey*.

Siam. But pray consider, captain —

Capt. That's good I'gad, talk of consideration to a captain: why dost not thou know that I have been undone for three kings, without any consideration? why I han't one single tester left to purchase a civil quartern: and how should I consider, with a pox to you?

Siam. Consider this then, captain —

[Gives him a guinea.]

Capt. Ay, this is sense now; this I can consider: and pr'ythee, *Dolly*, do thou consider too; for honour, thou know'st, is the nearest and dearest thing to a soldier: so pr'ythee carry thyself like the wife of my bosom: for, look thee, child, 'tis not any concern for thy carcase that makes me speak —

Siam. Thank you, good captain.

Capt. No, by *Pompey*, 'tis my honour; and look to't, you had best, for I may return molt rouzy bouzy, and if I find you have injur'd me, I swinge you all, by *Hercules*.

[Exit.]

Siam. So, get thee gone — *Betty*, is the china carry'd to my lady *Trickitt's*?

Betty. The fellow's come back, madam.

Siam. Has he brought the money?

Betty. No, she bid him call next week.

Siam. Gods bodikins! had not she promis'd me ready money, I had never parted with my goods: well, there's

no faith in these upstart great ladies : now must I make forty jaunts to t'other end o'th' town, and then I shall be paid in crack't money ; and pay poundage into the bargain.

Betty. She said you were oblig'd to her for the custom of the court, and owed her a good turn.

Siam. And she thinks to put me off with the court-custom ; that's good, i'faith : and I must afford her my ware for nothing : where's the heart set with diamonds I mist this morning ?

Betty. We have search'd high and low, but to no purpose.

Siam. Then I suspect my lady *Sinker* took it.

Betty. Suspect ! why, she's famous for it all the town over.

Siam. Nay, that may very well be : for, to my knowledge, greater ladies have been taken in the manner : but she shan't carry it off so.

Enter Lady Malepert and Wishwell.

I did not expect your ladyship this half hour : *Betty,* set on the tea-water.

[Exit *Betty.*]

Wif. We had a mind to chat by ourselves ; pr'ythee shut the door, that we may be private.

[*Siam goes out, the scene shuts upon her.*]

L. Mal. I swear I'm in mortal apprehensions : my lord *Lofty* has my secret, and I know him capable of any thing, to be reveng'd of me.

Wif. What can he do ? he's disgrac'd at court : and if he rails now, no body will believe him.

L. Mal. Ay, but he knows —

Wif. What does he know ? he knows you're a woman.

L. Mal. Lord ! you know where I have a mulberry spot —

Wif. Is that all : he brib'd it from your woman.

L. Mal. Well, I'll do what I can to prevent his being believ'd ; carry it civilly to him, and speak better of him than ever.

Wif.

Wifb. So will the town believe you but an honest jilt at worst.

L. Mal. But this sir *Ruff* is such a blustering half-witted coxcomb!

Wifb. If he had less wit, he were ne'er the worse for us: but a thousand pound, my dear!

Enter Betty.

Betty. My mistress bid me to tell your ladyship, Mr. *Gayman's* within, and has made up the number of the raffle.

L. Mal. We're a little busy yet, but shall be glad of his company. [Exit Betty.]

Wifb. She's not displeas'd at his being here—This *Gayman* is not for our turn, child; he's an observer; besides, tho' he loves his pleasure, he swears he won't pay for't, 'till past forty—Here's *Maria*.

Enter Maria.

Mar. The chair must wait—

L. Mal. Send away thy chair, child; thou shalt go home with us: we have basset this evening.

Betty to Maria.] *Mar.* I'll but pay it off, and return in a moment.

Wifb. That's a pretence: 'twas *Gayman* sent for her. He has so great a friendship for her, that, contrary to the principles of a well-bred man, he has ventur'd to give her good advice, and, I believe, warn'd her of our company.

L. Mal. I tax'd her of it, but she deny'd it.

Wifb. She's discreet, and has but one weakness, immoderate love of play—

L. Mal. And love of me; I can make her do any thing—

Wifb. But one, my dear: she's virtuous.

L. Mal. For that I keep her company—

Wifb. And for her money: for, to my knowledge, you have won above 600 l. of her at comet.

L. Mal. Not so much at comet; but more at all games.

Enter

Enter Maria.

Mar. The company is all within, my lord, Mr. *Gaymar*, and Sir *Ruff*—they're but looking on some stuffs, if you're at leisure—

Enter lord Malepert, Gayman, and sir Ruff.

L. Mal. My lord, shan't we have you company?

Ld. Mal. Indeed, my dear, I did but stay to chuse some white peeling for a pair of breeches—

L. Mal. Drawers, my lord, you mean.

Ld. Mal. Jesu! no; you know, I never wear linings.

L. Mal. Shall we raffle?

Ld. Mal. I must drink some tea first—*Siam*, is the tea ready?

Enter Siam.

Siam. 'Tis just put in—Good lord! I wonder you'll go so, like a floven: here's a periwig well comb'd; and a cravat fits finely, to appear in ladies company.

Ld. Mal. Very well, Mrs. *Siam*; but had not you twins six months after you were marry'd, tho'?

Siam. No, Limberham: nor will you get half a one, in six years after you are marry'd.

Ld. Mal. I wonder, ladies, any body will buy of Mrs. *Siam*.

Siam. Mrs. *Bantam*'s things are ten times better.

Siam. Ten times dearer, and ten times worse, I faith—What! lord Tattletale, you told her, I said, she was a papist.

Ld. Mal. And she said you were an atheist, and believed in nothing but Scotch divinity.

Siam. And what do you believe in? nothing but a favourite, or sir *Feminine*, that old woman in man's cloaths—

Ld. Mal. He swears you're a bawd, Mrs. *Siam*—

Siam. Not to him, nor his neices, in good faith.

Ld. Mal. Why, why, pray?

Siam. Why, he has no use for one; and they need none: Lord help your head come drink your tea.

Gay. Already in council!

[Sir *Ruff* with *Wishwell* and *Lady Malepert*.]

Sir Ruff. What madam *Wishwell* has told your ladyship,

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Ship, you may depend upon: I am a man of honour, and your humble servant, madam.

Wif. My lady believes you, sir *Ruff*: to night at twelve; you know the garden-door.

Sic Ruff. My happiness is so amazing!

Wif. Contain yourself: we are observ'd. What? drinking tea, my lord?

Ld. Mal. Yes, if *Siam* wou'd give me a little sugar; I love sweet things mightily.

Siam. Yes, too much for a wit: there; 'tis syrup for you— [Giving him sugar.]

L. Mal. Pr'ythee, *Siam*, fill me some tea.

[Sir *Ruff* goes awkwardly to help my lady, and spills my lord's dish upon him.]

Ld. Mal. O law! he has scalded me to death.

Sir Ruff. Pough! 'twas almost cold: and tea, you know, never burns.

Ld. Mal. Jesu! and what a pickle am I in!

Siam. Here's a do with a drop of water! come, let me rub you down, Tom-dingle.—

Enter Captain.

Capt. Ounds! what's this? Kissing your Cockrill before my face! by Pompey who am I? I'll pepper you, you and your young urchin too; I will, by Pompey.

Ld. Mal. O law! captain, but hear reason: new as I hope for marshy, there was no harm.

Capt. Ounds! that's a good one: no harm to kiss my *Dolly*?

L. Mal. Nay, take my word for't, captain, you need not fear when I am by.

Capt. Why, look you, you may be as little concern'd for your puppy, as you please, madam: but for my damn'd—

Siam. Nay, pr'ythee, Numpee, don't disturb the company; they were going to raffle.

Capt. Yes, by Pompey, you were a raffling: I caught you at it, a raffling for my honour, with a pox to you.

Gay. No, faith, captain, we shall raffle for a better thing.

Capt.

Capt. Ounds! sir, what's that you say?

Gav. Why, I say, what we raffle for, is of threescore pound value: say nothing, and you go to twelve with me.

Capt. Say'st thou so, old boy? 'tis so like *Spearing's*, that for once I am contented.

L. Mal. Come then, shall we raffle?

Sian. Here's the box, ladies.

[*The company about the table. Maria throws.*

Mar. Two cinques, and a quater!

Ld. Mal. That's fifteen.

Gay. Exactly, my lord; four and ten.

Ld. Mal. O law! no; fourteen.

Mar. And thirteen, is seven and twenty, [Throws.
And eighteen. [Throws.

Ld. Mal. No, two sixes, and an ace.

Mar. Well, that's forty —

[*They throw round, all but L. Mal. and Gayman.*
Gay. Confederacy! did not you observe *Wistwell* turn over one of your dice?

Mar. 'Twas by chance, playing with her fan.

Gay. You're sincere yourself, and believe every body so, but me.

Sir Ruff. Damn these dice — — — [*Throws down the box.*

Gay. Before the ladies, sir *Ruff*?

Sir Ruff. But I always lose, when I play fair.

L. Mal. Come, now for my fortune —

[*Going to throw.*

Sir Ruff. Madam, I have some doctors in my pocket, if you please to use 'em.

L. Mal. What doctors, sir?

Sir Ruff. Why, don't you know the doctors? the dice that only run the high chances. I'll put 'em into your box, and nobody the wiser.

L. Mal. You shou'd ha' don't without telling me.

Sir Ruff. So I can still, madam — — [*Lady throws.*] I stand cross legg'd for you, madam — — Vigorously done, madam — —

L. Mal. I have lost it.

Gay. I despair of winning — — 'tis yours — — [*To Mar.*
Capt.,

Capt. Oands ! I go to twelve with you—— [*To Gay.*
Mar. Come, throw, sir—— [*Gayman wins it.*
Gay. 'Tis mine with much ado.

Enter Betty to the Captain.

Capt. A hard world, faith and troth ; but I brought
 luck along with me.

Gay. I remember you, captain.

Betty. Sir, sir *Symphony*, and his instruments, are at
 the door, in half a dozen coaches, and stay for you.

Capt. Adso, where's my gittern ?

Siam. Why, Numpee, you broke your gittern, you
 know.

Capt. My gittern ! mouldy chops ! where were you bred
 I trow ? but my neighbour *Twingle* the barber has one,
 I'll borrow it so long from his customers. [*Exit.*

Ld. Mal. Did you hear of the foolish accident befell
 Sir *Symphony* ?

L. Mal. What was't, my lord ?

Ld. Mal. Why, serenading, t'other night, his guittar
 and he fell into a cellar, and like to break both their
 necks.

L. Mal. What say you to a pooile at comet, at my
 house ? [*To Wishwell.*

Wifb. Sir *Ruff*, will you make one ?

Sir Ruff. I am always devoted.

Gay. Ladies, shan't I be troublesome ?

Wifb. The devil take him. [*Afide.*

L. Mal. We shall be glad of your company.

Ld. Mal. Well, I'll go before in a hackney, and get
 things ready for you : I find, I must shew you the way —

Gay. Well said, my lord, you in the front appear :
 And I may help you to bring up the rear. [*Exeunt.*

A C T

ACT IV. SCENE I.

SCENE Lord Malepert's dining-room.

Enter Lord Malepert, and Wishwell.

Ld. Mal. W E L L, how do you like Sir *Ruff*? he's a little mutinous at my wit sometimes; but he's good-natur'd; and then has the sense and courage of a lion; but the baronet's worship may pass for a 'squire at comet tho'.

Wifb. One wou'd almost swear he loses on purpose to my lady.

Ld. Mal. Why so one wou'd, I vow now, if one did not know the company. Well, I swear now, Mrs. *Wishwell*, you look so young, you are not above five-and-twenty, are you?

Wifb. Nay, if you're witty upon your friends, I have done with you.

Ld. Mal. Pr'ythee now, I won't be witty again these two hours.

Wifb. For once I'll take your word. Well, my lord, you're happy in a good lady; she's as discreet as she's handsome.

Ld. Mal. You know a well-bred man must not think too well of his own wife: but I vow now, before I was marry'd, I thought her as handsome as an angel.

Wifb. My lord *Lofty* has not been here of late.

Ld. Mal. He wou'd hardly bow to me at the play, last night; but I thought he was out of humour for being turn'd out; and yet I vow I had no hand in't.

Wifb. For being turn'd out of this house I believe.

Ld. Mal. O law! why I carry'd it the civilest to him in the world.

Wifb. But he defin'd your lady should be civil to him.

Ld. Mal. And so she was, I hope: why, I have known her alone with him, in her closet, when she was deny'd to every body else.

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Wifb.

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Wifb. While she thought him a man of honour, for your sake she suffer'd him.

Ld. Mal. Have a care what you say; I'm told, he's likely to be greater than ever.

Wifb. But must not with your lady.

Ld. Mal. Ay, but he must tho': I han't got the patent he promised me.

Wifb. And he is to give you a new crest to your new coronet?

Ld. Mal. No, really, I like mine very well: the golden calf has been the crest of our family, ever since the Conquest.

Wifb. The horns will grow in time. [Aside.] Dull man! he has made love to your lady.

Ld. Mal. Jesu! that's pleasant! a statesman make love! why, he can no more deal with a mistress than with a house of commons.

Wifb. Come, leave your fooling; and promise me not to quarrel with him; you shall promise me, for you are so nice in points of honour I know.

Ld. Mal. Honour! lord help your head (as *Siam* says) I have as much honour as I care for; I am a lord; and shall hardly quarrel to get more.

Wifb. But you must promise me then, to take no notice of it to my lady: she'd never forgive what I tell you; out of the respect I have for you both.

Ld. Mal. Nay, I vow I'm mightily oblig'd to you; and so is my wife; tho' the jesters in the dancing-room are apt to laugh at me, when I tell 'em so. But had he the impudence to make love to her?

Wifb. Ay, more than so, he surpriz'd her one day, in her closet, and wou'd ha' ravish'd her.

Ld. Mal. O law! I did not think a man of fifty cou'd ravish —

Wifb. Had not her virtue, and my seasonable assistance prevented him: but I found her just fall'n into a swoon.

Ld. Mal. How! fall'n into a swoon! nay, then he might ravish her: but, tho' I say it, that shou'd not say it, there are some of our family (tho' they can't ravish as well as he)

he) shou'd they know this, were he ten times my lord
Lefty—I'll do't myself—

Wifb. Nay, remember what you promis'd me.

Ld. Mal. No matter for that, I'll about it instantly.

Wifb. For heav'n's sake, you won't murder him.

Ld. Mal. No, that's the way to hang'd for't; I'll complain to the king—

Wifb. And make yourself and family ridiculous: 'tis enough your lady's virtuous, and you know it. But what if this base man should brag of favours?

Ld. Mal. Ay, but what signifies our wives virtue, if they are so liable to fall into a swoon? any woman may be taken napping, you know.

Wifb. But if this base man should brag of favours?

Ld. Mal. Why, let him brag, he's out of favour at court; and whatever he says now goes for nothing in the drawing-room; and I care not this, what he can say any where else; for I wou'd not be known by my good will out of the verge of *Whiteball*.

Wifb. Or if some of your pretended friends, shou'd go about to make you suspect me.

Ld. Mal. Tho' I shou'd surprize 'em in the manner, and you standing centry—

Enter lady Malepert to 'em.

Wifb. My lady's here—

L. Mal. How! *Wifbwell!* I protest I don't understand this: indeed my lord I shall be jealous of you.

Ld. Mal. But I shall never be jealous of you, my lady.

L. Mal. You need not, dear, knowing yourself so well: if I were wantonly inclin'd, where cou'd I mend myself?

Ld. Mal. Where am I? sure paradise is round me: to touch thee's heav'n, but to enjoy thee! oh—

L. Mal. Have my lord and you been at the cordial waters?

Wifb. We have been gravely talking of the deceit and wickedness of the age, madam.

L. Mal. I understand you— [Aside to her.] My lord, when shall we into the country? I'm quite

weary of this town ; the company and public diversions carry you so much abroad, I languish dayes without you ; there I shou'd be oftener blest.

Ld. Mal. Well, dear, I vow now, I won't be a moment from you, but when I'm in other company : but that 'tis not the fashion to be fond of one's wife, I verily believe I cou'd say a great many soft things to her.

L. Mal. Pray, my dear, let's go to *Monkey-Hill*.

Ld. Mal. O law ! what shou'd I do in the country ? there's no levées, no mall, no plays, no opera, no tea at *Siam's*, no *Hyde-Park*, no music-meeting, no basset, no drawing-room, no masquerades, nor no hackney-coaches to run about in ; and you know I love running about mightily.

Wifb. Nor no body that understands good breeding.

Ld. Mal. There the justice's lady comes to visit, and ask questions after the fashion : and how do they wear their hair ? do they carry their heads as high as they did last *Easter* term ?

Wifb. And, lord ! is such a one as wicked as she was in the last lampoon ? we have no such creatures in the country, I assure you.

Ld. Mal. And then if I talk wit, to banter Mr. *Justice* about state affairs, he stares at me, and does not understand me : unless one laugh one's self, the jests are lost upon 'em.

L. Mal. Well, well, there are a thousand innocent diversions.—

Ld. Mal. What ! angling for gudgeons, bowls and ninepins ?

L. Mal. More wholesome and diverting than always the dusty mill-horse driving in *Hyde-Park*.

Ld. Mal. O law ! don't prophanre *Hyde-Park* : is there any thing so pleasant as to go there alone, and find fault with the company ? why there can't a horse, or a livery, 'scape a man, that has a mind to be witty : and then I sell bargains to the orange-women.

L. Mal. If you lov'd, as I do, you wou'd like the country ; there I shou'd have you weeks together ; you might sit by, and see me work ; or read a play or a novel to me.

Ld. Mal.

Ld. Mal. Lord! you know, if I read three minutes together, I fall asleep: and then if I shou'd chance to be alone, what wou'd become of me? I never think, but it puts me into the spleen, I'm read to cry.

Wife. Now if you have over-acted your part, and he shou'd go into the country. [Footman to my lord.]

L. Mal. I know him too well for that.

Ld. Mal. Well, madam, adieu—

Wife. Jesu! whether now?

Ld. Mal. I'll be at home time enough to go to bed with you: but Sir *Barnaby Bunter*, Captain *Tilfer*, and Sir *Cantaver Bawwaw* stay in the fide-box for me.

L. Mal. I wonder you'll leave me for such coxcombs.

Ld. Mal. O law! coxcombs! have a care what you say: *Banter* has a world of wit: he drove my chariot a whole evening at *Hyde-Park*, in my coachman's perriwig, and livery: I swear he drives as well as any gentleman in *England*; I wonder where he learnt it?

Wife. It may be natural to him; his father kept a coachman.

Ld. Mal. Then Sir *Cantaver Bawwaw*—I wish you had been with us t'other night—we had a country cudden with us; he play'd about him all night; I warrant you, he dumfounded him a hundred times.

Wife. Indeed!

Ld. Mal. Aye, and once, when I was bantering the 'squire, what do you think? he put some gun powder under his chair, and blew him up.

L. Mal. And did the 'squire take it?

Ld. Mal. At the first he was a little angry; but we all swore 'twas a squibb thrown into the window: then captain *Tilfer* came souse upon him indeed, and threw a whole glass of claret in his face.

L. Mal. And cou'd you swear off that too?

Ld. Mal. No truly, they put pluckt up a spirit, struck *Tilfer*, and challeng'd him to go down with him; now the captain begg'd his pardon, because he wou'd not spoil company; but wink'd, and laugh'd upon us all the while, for we were in the secret you know—but I must go to 'em, or they'll laugh at me; and swear I'm under correction;

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refection; and that a body wou'd not have every one know
neither, you know. [Exit.

Wifb. So, he's safe for this night.

L. Mal. How can we trust to that?

Wifb. Pray trust to me: I had him sent for; and will
pretend to lie with you: shou'd my lord come home,
we're gone to bed; besides, you have bred him up to lie
in his dressing-room, upon these occasions.

L. Mal. Well, if it must be so: for your sake I can
do any thing.

Wifb. And something for you own: there's money,
that's certain: and for any other disappointment, you
may bear it the better from a man you don't like: we
must not always please ourselves, child. [Exeunt.

S C E N E *the going into Sir Symphony's.*

Sir Ruff going hastily before *Gayman*.

Gay. Sir *Ruff*, Sir *Ruff*! you overlook your friends.

Sir Ruff. It must be a very good friend, I don't over-
look at this time.

Gay. Why, what's the matter?

Sir Ruff. Why, I'm an emperor; and this the night of
my coronation; know, friend, for thou art the only
confidant of my pleasure, that this night, at twelve,
the incomparable madam *Wifewill* receives me at my la-
dy's garden-door; this being told, I must be gone: for
nothing but the pleasure of imparting to my bosom-
friend, cou'd detain me a moment.

Gay. But where's the haste now?

Sir Ruff. The haste! why they may be at the music,
for ought I know: and if I shou'd not be there to re-
ceive 'em: where's the haste now? [Exit.

Gay. Be crown'd to night, do you say? no, no, I'll
spoil his holiday.

Enter Granger.

Gran. What, *Gayman*, thoughtful?

Gay. I have it in my head, but you must help me out
with it.

Enter

Enter Jano.

Jano. Mr. Granger—

Gran. Well said, my Mercury!

Jano. Here's an answer to your letter, sir. But I must not be seen here, lest my lady shou'd be known to be within in a masque; and that she wou'd not for any thing: she says, sir, you must not know her.

Gran. But what said my lady Trickitt?

Jano. Indeed, sir, I dare not stay any longer.

Gran. There's thy guinea, child. [Exit Jano.]

Enter Garnish.

Garn. A lady's trophy, Mr. Granger.

Gran. A fore-runner of dark deeds; you shall hear it.

Reads the note.] *I'm glad you're converted; and won't fail to be at Rosamond's-pond, at ten exactly, where I will use my best endeavours to confirm you.*

Gay. A very pious gentlewoman, this!

Garn. She'd make an admirable missionary for China, or the Mogul's country.

Gran. Mine's a tender conscience, and requires extraordinary helps.

Garn. Methinks you're something frank of the lady's secrets.

Gran. O sir, they allow all freedoms to us, who are able to discover their good qualities, as well as their intrigues.

Gay. There's no man hindered from telling, but he that enters no further into the secret. Besides ours are sworn mistresses; and the more we set out their perfections, the more their renown.

Gran. Nay, mine's a very sun-flower: whene'er the golden god but shows his head, she opens presently.

Garn. Fie, fie, I shall lose my reputation with you.

Gran. You! why with all your prudence, of never bowing to your mistress in a public place, stealing glances under your hat, and following her at a fly distance in

252 *The MAID'S LAST PRAYER; or,*
the Mall, you are found out as well as we, who make
no mystery of the matter.

Gay. Nay, sooner ; for your gravity is suspected of a
design, while the franker fellows have not credit enough
with the town to establish a scandal.

Garn. But a little discretion does no harm.

Gran. Discretion ! why that's enough to ruin a man
with the whole sex : he that has liv'd to twenty, with-
out the reputation of a wicked fellow, will never be
allow'd to be wicked in a fashionable company as long as
he lives.

Garn. You're only for the brutal part, gentlemen.

Gran. I don't know what you mean by the brutal part :
mine's a healthy constitution ; it ebbs, and flows, like the
sea, and needs nothing but itself to cause its motion.

Gay. There's part of Sir Symphony's equipage, 'tis time
to follow — [Instruments carry'd over the stage.]

Garn. At ten o'clock ! I shall watch you, Mr. Granger.
[Exeunt.]

S C E N E drawn, shows a table, with instruments, chairs
set, Sir Ruff, Gayman, Granger, Garnish, women in
mask, captain, bullies, Sir Symphony tuning instruments,
Drydrubb tuning his cittern ; knocking at the door, the
porter busy in his employment.

Port. Who's there ? what wou'd you have ? [Knocking.
Without.] Is Mr. Scaperwell within ?

Port. No ; you may find him at the Bear. [Knocking.
Without.] Tell Sir Symphony here are some gentlemen
desire the favour to come in.

Port. Lord, sir, I can't let you in : here's scarce room
already for the gentlemen performers to stir their el-
bows — [Knocking.] Well, what's the matter now ?

Without.] Sir, here's Mr. Humdrum's base-viol —

Port. Give it me. [Shuts the door.]

Without.] Here are ladies. [Knocking again.]

Port. The ladies must come in.

Enter

Enter lady Susan and Mrs. Judy, masqu'd.

L. Su. O law ! yonder he's talking to other ladies.
But that's because I was not here : yet he is not to know
I'm here ; tho' I hope my little *Jaso* has told him.

Gran. 'Tis so—— [To Gayman.
Thus by the hobble in her pace,
Eneas knew his mother's grace.
Now will I be a very obedient lover, and not know
her.

Capt. Ounds ! this may be my—No, no, it is not she.
[The captain peers about the masks.]

Sir Sym. Ladies, you're very welcome ; chairs there.
Wou'd you wou'd unmash, and join the arms of your
beauty to the force of the music, that not a heart might
'scape.

L. Su. I know, fir, you are too well bred, not to give
us our liberty.

Sir Sym. This place is sacred to the fair, you must
command, ladies.

Sir Ruff. Knight, is your nocturnal here ? are they
good goods, I must examine. [Offers at L. Susan.]

L. Su. O Jesu ! this rude fellow !

Sir Sym. Sir, you may talk 'till the music plays, but
here you must excuse me, I suffer no ruffling——

[Goes to the table.]
Sir Ruff. Zounds ! fir, I'll excuse neither them, nor
you, for all your scraping.

Gay. This must be improv'd to a quarrel. [To Granger.
Hark you, Sir Ruff——]

Sir Ruff. Zounds ! fir, I'll protect the damsels, as
much as any man.

Gran. Ay, Sir Ruff, get the rude fool beaten, that
wou'd affront 'em, do.

L. Su. O Jesu ! Mr. Granger, protect me, I'm ready
to die.

Gran. There's no danger, madam.

L. Su. Pray lead me to a chair, I tremble every joint
of me ; I shall fall into a fit.

Gran. 'Twou'd break Sir Symphony's heart, madam.

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L. Su. O law! I hope you don't know me; I protest I wou'd not be known for the world.

Gran. I only guess your quality; by your air.

L. Su. But why do you tax me for Sir Symphony? I swear, sir, I value no body more than yourself: but, I vow, you have oblig'd me extremely —

Sir Sym. All discords! fourths, and sevenths! gentlemen. Wou'd that ear of yours were reform'd once —

Gran. In a pillory?

Sir Sym. Come, come, let's tune, we make the ladies stay.

[He takes a base-viol, and while he is tuning, one of the bullies unwinds the pegs over his head: then he lays down the bow, which the bully draws through the candle; when Sir Symphony tries to play, he can't make it sound.

Sir Sym. Lord! gentlemen, 'tis impossible to play at this rate: standing so near me, as you do, your breath has so moisten'd my strings, they won't sound.

[Tries again.

Bully. Damn me, Tom, the knight crowds most splendidly: I'll banter him: pray, sir, when you lengthen a crotchet into quavers, and divide it by minums, does not your cravat-string deaden the sound of your fiddle?

Sir Sym. Mine's a Cremona, and cost me fifty pounds, gentlemen; pray suspend your curiosity, and come to my chamber, and I'll resolve you any question in music.

Sir Ruff. But, sir, if the volatile parts of music should jostle with the effluviums of the air; for Tycho Brache holds, all sounds go in a right line by undulation: can common time be consistent with a jigg?

Sir Sym. Lord, sir, you make such a noise — I make all my jiggs in common time; are you satisfy'd?

Sir Ruff. But if harmony was first discover'd by the beating of hammers upon an anvil; why shou'd not your head make the most melodious instrument? for Aristotle holds that your hollow vessels —

Sir Sym. If you're for a cockpit, so — come, pray let's begin — [All the while the symphony plays, he beats.

time and speaks in admiration of it.

Sir Sym. O Gad! there's a flat note! there's art! how sur-

surprizingly the key changes ! O law ! there's a double relish ! I swear, sir, you have the sweetest little finger in England ! ha ! that stroke's new ; I tremble every inch of me : now ladies look to your hearts—Softly, gentlemen—remember the echo—captain, you play the wrong tune—O law ! my teeth ! my teeth ! for God's sake, captain, mind your cittern—Now the fuga, bases ! again, again ! lord ! Mr. Humdrum, you come in three bars too soon. Come, now the song—

A SONG, set by H. Purcell, and sung by Mrs. Hodgson.

I.

T'HO' you make no return to my passion,
Still I presume to adore ;
'Tis in love but an odd reputation,
Faintly repuls'd to give o'er ;
When you talk of your duty,
I gaze on your beauty,
Nor mind the dull maxim at all ;
Let it reign in Cheapside,
With the citizen's bride,
It will ne'er be receiv'd in Whitehall.

II.

*W*hat apocryphal tales are you told ?
By one, who wou'd make you believe,
That, because of to have and to hold,
You still must be pinn'd to his sleeve ;
'Tis apparent high treason,
Against love, and reason,
Shou'd one such a treasure engross ;
He that knows not the joys,
That attend such a choice,
Shou'd resign to another who does.

A SONG, written by Anthony Henry, esquire, set by Mr. Purcell, and sung by Mrs. Ayliff, and Mrs. Hodgson.

*No, no, no, no, resistance is but vain,
And only adds new weight to Cupid's chain ;
A thousand ways, a thousand arts,
The tyrant knows to captivate our hearts ;
Sometimes he sighs employs, and sometimes tries
The universal language of the eyes ;
The fierce, with fierceness he destroys ;
The weak with tenderness decoys ;
He kills the strong with joy, the weak with pain,
No, no, no, no, resistance is but vain.*

Gran. This is admirable : but if you wou'd oblige the ladies, you must play your solo.

Sir Sym. With all my heart, if the captain will accompany.

1 Bully. Pox a' this scraping, and tooting : shall we eclipse, Tom, and make it a rankum ?

2 Bully. No, no, we'll dumfound the baronet.

[They dumfound him, on each side, as he turns.]

Sir Sym. Who's that ? What do you mean ? [Turning quick, one hits him in the eye] —— This is not to be borne : isn't you, take that, sir.

[Strikes him with a bass-viol, and leaves it upon his head.]

Gay. This is a common cause.

[They draw, drive the bullies out, the women run out at the other door, Sir Ruff retires to a corner of the stage, and draws, the others return ——]

Gran. These brutes have almost destroy'd all the public diversions of the town.

Gay. Stand you by Sir Symphony, [To Granger.] I'll bring him a challenge —— I've always thought you brave, Sir Ruff.

Sir Ruff. Why, who dares think otherwise ?

Gay. I believe Sir Symphony will meet you.

Sir Ruff. Or I'll post him : but what has he done ?

Gay.

Gay. (*Softly*)—You design'd it, I suppose; and your best way is to be beforehand with him, I'll stand by you—

[*Whisper.*]

Gran. Why I saw him; he encourag'd 'em; besides, fidler's but a starvy title for a knight!

Sir Sym. Why, did he call me fidler?

Gran. He said you were a wretched scraper, only fit to play to a garland upon a *May-day*: my lady *Susan* heard him, as well as I.

Sir Sym. Nay if one were sure of that, if she heard him: one wou'd not do a foolish thing, hand over head, without reason, you know.

Gran. If you bring it to any thing, let me serve you; you shall find me at my lodgings— [Exit.]

Sir Ruff. Well then, desire him to meet me, with his sword in his hand, to-morrow morning.

Gay. If he finds you so backward, he'll never ask your pardon.

Sir Ruff. But to-night I have business, you know.

Gay. Greater than your honour?

Sir Ruff. 'Tis very unfortunate—But use your pleasure.

Gay. Sir, I hope you'll pardon my message. *Sir Ruff* desires you wou'd meet him, with yoar second, in *Moor-fields*.

Sir Sym. I was just designing to send to him, to meet me, to-morrow morning.

Gay. He desires it may be to-night, sir.

Sir Sym. To-night?

Gay. At twelve: the moon shines very clear; at *Bethlem-gate*, at twelve, sir—

Sir Sym. I must send to Mr. *Granger*; I shan't fail, sir— [Exit.]

Gay. Come, sir, I have business for an hour; but get you ready, you need not make your will, I believe; I'll meet you at the *Sun* tavern behind the '*Change*', and not fail—to disappoint you of your seconds. [*Afide. Extra.*]

SCENE

SCENE Rosamond's Pond.

Granger alone.

Let the woman deserve as little as her man, she seldom fails of a favourable opinion of her own charms ; and, in the intrigue, if it be possible, will be the greater fool of the two. Because I like Trickitt, she thinks I'm in love with her : why, how has she the impudence to think so ! but she does think so ; for in this note, she has promis'd to meet me here : if she has honesty enough to be as good as her word, she needs no greater curse : there was no occasion of my knowing that she can make her husband a cuckold, to make me have an ill opinion of her : I always thought so ill of her, that 'tis now necessary to think a little while well, to think worse of her than I did : that must be my reason of liking her ; a malicious pleasure of revenging the quarrel of those fools (not forgetting her dear lord) who have trusted, and been deceiv'd by her. She can't deceive me.

Enter Lady Susan in a mask.

Whom we have here ? a sister in affliction ! if my nymph, and her shepherd have stray'd together : 'twere a gentle charity, of my side, to propose a club of inconstancy for a revenge.

L. Su. Mr. Granger ! is't you ?

Gran. The best part of him, madam.

L. Su. O law ; Mr. Granger ! I fear I have tir'd your patience : an impertinent kinswoman pop't in upon me, and kept me above half an hour, I vow now.

Gran. A trick upon me ! but I'll fit her. [Aside.] I thought the minutes ages, till you came.

L. Su. O Jesu ! and did you, dear Mr. Granger ?

Gran. By her, O Jesu, I guess the party — [Aside.] madam, this happiness atones for all.

L. Su. O Jesu ! but can you love me dearly ?

Gran. More than heav'n.

L. Su. And you'll be constant ?

Gran. As Penelope.

L. Su.

L. Su. And you'll love me for ever and ever?

Grang. Amen, to the end of the chapter.

L. Su. You'll swear all this?

Grang. The Bible through, madam: by your fair self, by all—

L. Su. Hold, hold, good sir, enough: well, we shall be so happy; but when? for now you may command me.

Grang. Now, madam, this instant——[Embracing her.

L. Su. O Jesu! what do you mean?

Grang. To let you know how well I love you.

L. Su. No, I vow, I wou'd not for all the world: as I hope for massy, you must hate me, to offer this.

Grang. Rather if I shou'd not offer it, madam; the opportunity, and you are kind——

L. Su. O law! sir! if you'll be honourable——

Grang. These shades are honourable: you are not the first woman has trusted her honour with 'em: keep your own counsel, and they'll tell no tales to your relations, to put you out of countenance, as you walk barefac'd this way with 'em.

L. Su. But this to a lady of my quality.

Grang. Why, 'twere a downright slight upon you not to offer to be civil to you: and a woman of quality can bear any thing better than a slight, you know: besides, the place, and hour take all distinction off: come, come, you have made as decent a resistance as is necessary to excuse you to your quality.

L. Su. Well, Mr. Granger, I thought you had more respect for me, else I shou'd never have trusted myself with you alone; in the honourable way of marriage, I own I cou'd receive you.

Grang. Why, you are marry'd already.

L. Su. O crimine! no; who do you take me for?

Grang. Nay, if you're not marry'd you must tell me.

L. Su. Pray, who did you visit this afternoon?

Grang. A worthy, grave lady, lady Susan Malepert.

L. Su. Suppose it her you talk to.

Grang. Suppose you her! suppose my lady Susan with a man, alone, at ten at night, and in this place too! no, no, that is not to be suppos'd; and you are no better than

you shou'd be, to offer it: if you were not in petticoats, you shou'd know how I resent a wrong so great to her I so much honour.

L. Ss. Why then, I vow now----

Grang. Nay, never load your crime with perjury.

L. Ss. Why, dear sir, did not you appoint this place?

Grang. But that lady does not use to answer appointments.

L. Ss. And wou'd you make my generous pity appear a crime?

Grang. For the generous pity you speak of, I wou'd have you to know, that lady has none for any man, at Rosamond's pond.

L. Ss. O Jesu! sir! why sare 'tis no crime, in an honourable way, to see the man one loves.

Grang. Love! why that's a folly lady *Susan* has renounc'd these twenty years: her pulse beats even, and her sober blood runs quiet in her veins: and as for matrimony, I know the very name wou'd frighten her; besides, I dare not aim so high.

L. Ss. O Jesu! your merit equals you to all things; and were I ten times what I am----

Grang. Thou art a thing I must despise; a midnight rroller; nay worse, some mischief-making fiend, who woud'nt assume the title of an angel, to be the more a devil. Bless me! methinks I see the cloven foot peep under her petticoat! defend me! I say, and deliver me from such company. [Exit.

L. Ss. Jesu! what can this mean? Either he did not, or he wou'd not know me: if he did not hope to meet me here, why did he write to me? He had my letter, else why came he hither? but then he said I was marry'd: O law! may he be suspected, Sir *Symphony*: well, I must forbid him my lodgings, I see that, to convince him. O law! but then he wou'd have been so rude! but that might be to try my virtue; for I must needs say, he spoke all the while of me with the greatest respect in the world. Well, I love him, that's certain, and must not lose him; I'll be plain with him the first time I see him; for marry him I must, and wear my weding ring upon my thumb too, that I'm resolv'd on. [Exit.

Enter Trickitt.

L. Tric. This is some sort of revenge upon the rogue for refusing me his money: how cou'd he imagine I wou'd allow him a favour, when he had given me such a reason to believe he did not think it worth paying for? I wou'd carry my malice farther, to punish his impudence in writing to me; but since his note has contributed to the cheating him with the person of lady *Sofia*, I am at the end my design; and am contented only to laugh at him—— [Garnish to her.]

Garn. Rest you merry, madam.

L. Tric. They may laugh that win, they say, Ma. Garnish.

Garn. And ladies seldom lose in such a town as this is, where there are so many civil persons to play at your own game too.

L. Tric. But how came you here at such a time?

Garn. Madam, I can't be so indifferent a lover not to watch the motions of your inclinations; finding your pleasure lie this evening in the Park, I came to find it out.

L. Tric. Indeed if you had come a little sooner, you might have found it: I have been very well pleas'd since I came here.

Garn. I believe so.

L. Tric. But you come a little too late to be a witness of it; the business is over.

Garn. O madam, I wou'd not disturb you, if the business had not been over. I met Mr. Granger, madam, and knew by him the business was over.

L. Tric. And what said he to you? Did not he look like an ass?

Garn. As men generally do upon such occasions: but I thought it unreasonable to tell him he look'd like an ass, because I knew he was not the first of your making.

L. Tric. Mr. Garnish!

Garn. I'm sure you have made an ass of me: but my jealousy has settler'd my eyes; and now I plainly see you wou'd

wou'd abuse me. When *Granger* sent you the note of assignation, I was with him.

L. Tric. Well, I receiv'd one from him—

Garn. O! did you fo?

L. Tric. By lady *Susan's* page.

Garn. By the same token he gave the boy a guinea to encourage so hopeful a beginning ; and told him, if he brought him an answer, he had another to set him up in his trade : you were not wanting on your part, I know.

L. Tric. Why, truly, no ; when I read it, I put it into another cover, and gave it the page to carry his lady : she was glad of the appointment, I suppose, sent him an answer, and came according to the invitation.

Garn. And what did you come for?

L. Tric. To laugh at the mistake—

Garn. And set him right. O, very probable!

L. Tric. 'Tis very true.

Garn. That you are very false. [Turning from her.]

L. Tric. I ne'er was false to you.

Garn. Away, away, it is not to be excus'd.

L. Tric. I don't excuse it.

Garn. No, no, it never can.

L. Tric. Why then it never shall ; and I am sorry I attempted it : if you don't think it worth your while to be satisfy'd, I'm sure I was in the wrong to endeavour it. Sir, as I remember, matters between you and me are entirely depending upon our good liking and pleasure : 'tis not in the nature of an amour to make one another uneasy : when once we begin to find faults, 'tis high time to find out fresh friends that have none : the most desperate jealousy of this kind lies within the remedy of parting.

Garn. It need not come to that neither, madam.

L. Tric. Sir, I won't be suspected, I won't be enquir'd into : a husband can do no more ; and I have enough of one husband and his ill-humours at home, I thank you, ever to allow of a husband abroad to torment me. Perhaps you think I can't break with you ; I wou'd have you to know, sir, I can, and will break with you and fifty more, rather than break one hour's rest for any of you.

you. I'll change as often as I shift my cloaths, but I'll light upon a man that has sense enough to value his own pleasure, without invading mine. If I depended upon you indeed, and there were nobody else to be had, you might tie me to your own terms; but, make us thankful, there's roving room enough in this dear town: I can provide myself, I warrant you.

A mistress is a name implies command:
Nor shall the scepter fail within my hand:
But if you wou'd take back that pow'r you gave,
Marry the woman you wou'd make a slave. [Exeunt.]

ACT V. SCENE I.

SCENE, Lord Malepert's House.

Gayman enters drafting, and repeating,

*O what a night was that! how soft the bed,
When on her panting bosom I was laid!
Warm in enjoyment, we together grew,
And as one mind, were but one body too.-----*

HOW, how? one mind! no, there I'm out: now can't I help thinking of Sir Ruff, and destroying the memory of this night's pleasures, by calling to mind they were all design'd for another. Can't I be contented with the enjoyment of a delicious woman, without reflecting, that any body else might have had her as well as I? 'Tis an impertinent curiosity in our natures, that when we have discover'd as much as we can to please us, will always drive us upon something to find fault with: curiosity did I call it? nay, gad, there's ingratitude in the bottom on't, I believe; for 'tis the way of the world, in other favours too, to lessen those obligations, as much as we can, which we han't in our honesty to return:

turn. Pox, I hate to be ungrateful: but I can't be ungrateful here, if I wou'd; for there was nothing design'd to me of the benefits I receiv'd: *Wifswell* let me in at the hour appointed for *Sir Ruff*: the lady receiv'd me for *Sir Ruff*; but when I think of the pleasures that came after, that she shou'd still mistake me for that bargaining booby of her bawd's providing, I don't forgive her; the furious riot, the expense of charms, the prodigality of life, and love (too vast for nature's bounty to support another hour) might have inform'd her better. 'Tis not yet day: *Wifswell's* my convoy; I can't get off without her. No matter now if she knows me. Who's this follows me?

Enter Lady Malepert.

L. Mal. I have slept away my life, my better part of it, my life of love: he's gone from me: was this an hour of rest, sleep had been welcome in a husband's bed; but in a lover's arms! he stole away, fearful of waking me, and fearful to be seen, he stole away, in every thing shewing his care of me: how cou'd *Sir Ruff* do this? O love! what can't thou not do in a woman's heart! that brutal thing, whom, as I thought, I loath'd, thy gentle fires hath soften'd by degrees, and melted into *Gayman*: night be still my friend, let me not see him, and I will think it was my *Gayman* still.

Gay. O this woman! I love her for herself, but hate her too.

L. Mal. Who's there?

Gay. Your lover.

L. Mal. O! be but ever so: can you forget? can you forgive me? can you excuse my being to be sold? Let *Wifswell* bear the mercenary blame—Her baseness wrought me to her sordid ends: but I'll return your bills—

Gay. Return my love; my fortune is but yours.

L. Mal. You are my better fortune.

Gay. O this happy night! but to remember it, a locket, or your picture—

L.

L. Mal. Take this ring, to make a better marriage.
Have you forgiv'n me?

Gay. How shall I convince you?

L. Mal. Why, only say you have.

Gay. Saying is too little: doing's the living proof,
that never lies; within you will believe me—

[*Going out, Wishwell to 'em with a candle.*

Wifb. Madam, madam, where are you? Bless my eye-sight!

L. Mal. Bless the woman: what's the matter?

Wifb. Are you the happy man, Mr. *Gayman*?

L. Mal. *Gayman*!

Gay. Thank you for making me so, Mrs. *Wishwell*.

L. Mal. *Gayman*! then I am ruin'd: base woman! have I deserv'd this from you?

Wifb. No, but you deserve it from yourself, for putting this trick upon me—

L. Mal. I put a trick upon you!

Wifb. And you will find the benefit of it in a little time; my lord and his drunken companions are coming up stairs to visit you: as you have manag'd the business without me, ev'n get off on't as well as you can; I wash my hands of it, and will retire without being seen.

[*Exit.*

L. Mal. O every way undone! follow her down the back-stairs—

Gay. Pox take her, she has double-lock'd the door.

L. Mal. What shall I do? what will become of me?

Gay. Nay, madam, let the worst come to the worst, Sir *Ruff* is oblig'd to take care of you—but I'll bring you off this time I warrant you.

Enter Lord Malepert, Granger, and two Bullies.

Gran. Singing.] *And be that is giv'n to doat*

On woman's inconstancy,

I wou'd not be in his coat

For a great deal of ready money.

What!

What! my lady, {and *Gayman*! are you too up together early, or late? Here's my lord and I are in conjunction too: why faith, madam, we thought of nothing but the spirit of clary: we did not expect such good company, my lord—

Ld. Mal. No, really, I did not expect to find a man with my wife.

Grang. But see how oddly things will happen sometimes.

Ld. Mal. Ay, so they will, very oddly indeed sometimes.

Gay. Oddly, Mr. *Granger*! — what the devil do you mean? [Aside.]

Grang. I'll bring you off, I warrant you, madam; *Gayman*'s an honest, well-condition'd fellow; but somewhat sleepy towards morning: how did your ladyship get him up so soon?

Gay. Pr'ythee recollect thyself: all's ruin'd else.

Grang. I must go snacks, *Gayman*.

L. Mal. He's must'ring all his little malice, 'twill end in mischief certainly.

Ld. Mal. Nick, go you and fetch the constable: but before he comes, madam, I command you, in the king's name, to tell me what you two have been doing together in my absence, against the peace of my bed and bosom?

Gay. Doing, my lord! why 'tis plain enough what we have been doing! any body may see what we have been doing—

Grang. Very plainly, my lord.

Gay. Or if they can't see, 'tis but hearing you talk as you do, and they may easily find what you have been doing: did not we sup together?

Ld. Mal. The devil's always very powerful at this time of the morning, gentlemen; but bear witness, he says they supp'd together.

Gay. They supp'd together! we, I say we; *Granger*, your lordship and I, and these two honest gentlemen. Gentlemen, I shall be proud to be better known to you: pox; do you think I dont know what I say? They remember me, tho' you won't, my lord.

i *Bully.*

1 *Bully*. What ! not remember Mr. Gayman ?

2 *Bully*. O ! perfectly, my lord.

Gay. Why, my noble lord, you are farther gone than I thought you were : if you drink your friends down with your bottle, — I have done with you : why, gentlemen, I don't believe you drank very hard after I left you ?

1 *Bully*. Not very hard, sir.

2 *Bully*. Not above a bottle a piece after you left us.

Grang. Well, a clear conscience is a great matter I see.

Ld. Mal. After he left us ! why, then I am drunk, and did not know it before : to my own thinking now I remember every thing in the company as perfectly. —— Why how can a man tell, at this rate, whether he's sober or no ?

Gay. Nay, I had been in the same pickle if I had staid with you : but when I saw you began to be maukish, you may remember, you sent me home before you, to knock up Mrs. Darkas, for the cordial waters, and you were to follow me.

Ld. Mal. Not that I know of.

Grang. Nay, my lord, there you must excuse me ; truth is truth ; you did send him home, for how cou'd we else have found him here ?

Ld. Mal. Why that's true : why, well, if I have forgot it, I beg all your pardons.

L. Mal. Is it not enough, my lord, that you come home at these unseasonable hours, but you must send up your drunken companions before you ?

Enter Wishwell.

Wishwell and I were asleep, when this unmannerly royster came into the dining-room : we thought there had been thieves, and poor *Wishwell* was almost frighted out of her sences.

Wifb. I must close with her for my own sake. [A side.]

L. Mal. Was this well done, my lord ? Yet I won't think you cou'd be so ill a man to design it as a plot upon my honour, I won't think you cou'd.

Wifb.

Wifb. My lord, my lord, is this the use you make of what I told you? Do you deserve so good a lady? And Mr. *Gayman*, was it like your character, to be confederate in so base an undertaking? And all of you to make a combination—

Ld. Mal. Nay, *Wifbwell*, as I hope to be sav'd now, 'twas altogether an accident; nobody had the least design upon my wife, or her honour, that I know of: there has happen'd some little mistakes, I must needs say; but I am always so deaf with drinking, you know—Gad fo! here's music: see who 'tis that serenades, I love serending mightily.

Enter Sir Ruff, and Sir Symphony with music.

Sir Ruff. I have out-staid my assignation; but this serenade will make her amends. What's here? *Gayman!* damme, sir, a man's well help'd up that trusts to you for a second: I waited for you above two hours.

Gay. I was all that while serving you elsewhere.

Sir Ruff. What do you mean?

Gay. Why, do you think yourself a fit man for a back-door? You might as well have trusted 'em again to let you in at the window: the ladies 'design'd to laugh at you, and being your friend, I made the quarrel, to send you out of their power.

Sir Ruff. Nay, gad, I thought there was something in't: for when *Sir Symphony* and I came face to face, we were presently friends, and agreed upon the fiddles. But since they design'd to make an ass of me, I'll have satisfaction, or my money again.

Gay. Experience can never be bought too dear, sir.

Sir Ruff. Zounds, sir, I'll go to her, and tell her she lies.

Gay. I'm glad I know your principles.

Grang. Sir *Symphony*, why do you look so angry? I hate blood-shed; then *Sir Ruff* and you are old friends; besides, *Gayman* and I had busines, as you see, sir; but how went the tilt? Ha! I'm sorry, for both your sakes, I can see thro' neither of you. I love a visto, as my lord says, mightily.

Enter Servant.

Serv. There are some maskers below desire to be admitted.

Ld. Mal. O gemini! wife, let 'em come up. [Ex. *Serv.* Hark you, gentlemen, let's even make a night on't: I have some masking habits within; captain *Tilter*, Sir *Ruff*, Sir *Symphony*, we'll all be in disguise. I love disguise when every body knows one mightily.

Sir Sym. Hang your masquerades, I begin to be tir'd of 'em: 'tis losing one's labour always upon other men's mistresses; when you have waited upon a gentlewoman thro' the ceremonies of the night, and think of going home with her, tho' you have cram'd her pockets as full of sweetmeats as they can hold, her own spark appears in the morning; beats you, perhaps, for offering to lead her to her coach, and forces you to walk home, ankle deep, in your *Turkish* habit.

Ld. Mal. O very foolish! leave Sir *Symphony* to his own face, he'll make nothing of that, I dare say for him: come, gentlemen, we shall be pure and merry, when we don't know one another.

[*Exeunt Ld. Mal. Sir Ruff, and Bullies.*]

Gay. I'm as good as my word you see, madam; I've brought you off: I have been oblig'd to you, and have return'd you your favour: but you must own, madam, mine carries something the better air along with it, because I generously design'd it for your ladyship.

L. Mal. What shall I say? What can I say?

Gay. I won't upbraid you, madam, you have done me the second good turn you had in your power to bestow: and since 'twas impossible to have you to myself, it goes a great way in my cure, to know that any fool may engage you for the time.

Enter L. Trickitt, L. Susan, Maria, and Garnish.

L. Mal. O very fortunate! and kind in you, and all the good company: how came I by this favour?

Mar. Why, truly, madam, being up at cards at lady

VOL. II. I Trickitt's,

170 *The Maid's Last Prayer; or, Trickitt's*, over the way, we cou'd not resist the temptation of the fiddles.

L. Su. But came in our masks, for fear we shou'd not be welcome.

L. Mal. So near a relation can't doubt that, madam.

Sir Sym. Ladies, I esteem myself very luckily here, for the entertainment of so much good company: I have some gentlemen in my consort, whom I can prevail upon to treat you in their way with a song or a dance.

A SONG written by Mr. Congreve, set by Mr. Purcell, and sung by Mrs. Ayliff.

I.

*TELL me no more I am deceiv'd,
That Chloe's false and common:
By heav'n, I all along believ'd
She was a very woman:
As such I lik'd, as such caref'd,
She still was constant, when possess'd;
She cou'd do more for no man.*

II.

*But o'er her thoughts on others ran;
And that you think a bad thing:
Perhaps she fancy'd you the man;-
Why what care I one farthing.
You think she's false, I'm sure she's kind:
I'll take her body, you her mind;
Who has the better bargain?*

Grang. Dear madam, I beg you a thousand pardons.

L. Su. O Jesu! for what, Mr. Granger?

Grang. 'Till you pull'd off your mask, I took you for a scandalous creature I met in St. James's Park last night, she was dress'd so like you.

L. Su. That lady was no ill friend of yours, I assure you.

Grang. You have no cause to speak well of her; for

she would ha' made me believe you were as bad as herself——Pox on her, how she haunts me——[Goes from her.] What has lady Susan done, Sir Symphony, you don't make your court to her?

L. Sa. I find he does not think it for his reputation, to marry a woman that would meet him in private. I'll mention it no farther.

Sir Sym. May I presume, madam, that this opportunity may be more favourable to my hopes——

L. Su. Lord, sir, I know nothing of an opportunity; pray be quiet, you would not talk of an opportunity before people, would you? why I never saw the like of you—— [Leaves him.]

Sir Sym. She always uses me ill before company.

L. Tric. Was it fine walking last night, Mr. Granger? Was there good company at Rosamond's Pond?

Grang. I did not see your ladyship there.

L. Tric. Me! fie, fie, a married woman there, Mr. Granger!

Grang. What, you were more housewifely employ'd? [Garnish bears what passes between Trickitt and Granger.]

L. Tric. More to my mind a great deal.

Grang. In private, madam?

L. Tric. In laughing at you. Lord! Mr. Granger, I thought you had been off the vanity of thinking women in love with you: 'tis past time a day for you to send love-letters about the neighbourhood, to corrupt the civil families: how had you the conscience to think a woman would have any business with you, but to laugh at you? I vow I thought you had been wiser.

Grang. Faith I thought so myself, madam.

L. Tric. And why would you put yourself into any woman's power to disappoint you? I thought the young fellows only, the beaux of a year's standing in the side-box, could be disappointed; who, by the extraordinary opinion of themselves, from their first summons, imagine it impossible for any woman to stay away from 'em. But you are satisfied at last, I see.

Grang. Indeed I am, that I was always in the wrong, when I had the least good opinion of you. I was in hopes of having it in my power to use you as you deserve (which you should have been sure of;) but since you have gone before me in this, I promise you, you shall never get the better of me in any other business, as long as I know you: and till you are older, I can't like you worse than I do.

[*Going from her.*

Garn. You have convinc'd and oblig'd me; and I thank you for the satisfaction.

L. Tric. Pray thank me when you are oblig'd, Mr. *Garnish*; I have done nothing to convince you: 'twas necessary to clear myself, and I have done it without a regard to your jealous thoughts upon the matter.

Garn. I promise you, I'll ne'er be jealous more.

L. Tric. Then here I promise you, I'll never give you cause to be jealous.

Enter Ld. Malepert, Sir Ruff, and Bullies, in masquerade.

Grang. Who have we here?

Ld. Mal. The ladies shall know us if they please.

Sir Ruff. We're men for their turn; sons of darkness, and fit for the busness of the night.

Gay. To beat up a bawdy-house, you scoundrels, how came you here?

[*They draw upon the masqueraders, drive them off, and return.*

Ld. Mal. Why, don't you know us? you're the strangest people in the world! murder a man in his own house!

Sir Sym. I'm for defending the ladies.

Grang. How could'it thou be so barbarous to the cuckold of thy bosom to frighten him so terribly?

Gay. He began to be troublesome: besides, I have at present a quarrel to the family.

[*Goes to Wishwell and Lady Malepert.*

L. Su. I hope you are not hurt, Mr. *Granger*, I would not for the world, I vow now, have such a thing happen in my company: what will the world say?

Grang. Why e'en nothing at all: the world does not care if we were hang'd, I assure you.

Gay.

Gay. This ring, madam, I valu'd only as an evidence of my good fortune, which, since the case is so plain, I return to your ladyship again. [To *lady Malepert.*] I don't observe that dearness between you and Mrs. *Wifswell*, that us'd to be; don't let me make a breach in that friendship which may be so serviceable to you both: you're both in a mistake, neither has betray'd t'other: indeed Sir *Ruff* made me his confidant, and qualify'd me for the welcome I have found. Mrs. *Wifswell*, now I'm sure you'll be my friend, since you know I have it in my power to be your enemy. And for you, madam, I am oblig'd to justify you to every body but myself.

[Leaves 'em and goes to *Maria*.]

L. Mal. 'Tis more than I deserve. O, I must hate you, you have undone me with the only man I ever lov'd or shall—

[Turns from her.]

Wifb. Then I am sure to keep her in my own power.

Enter Lord Malepert in his own cloaths.

Ld. Mal. Lord! this is the oddest thing in the world, turn a man out of his own doors for coming to divert you: 'twas as much as I could do, I vow now, to persuade the footman to let me in again.

Gay. Why, were you one of 'em, my lord?

Ld. Mal. One of 'em, yes I think I was.

Grang. Who would ha' thought you kept such company?

Garn. We did not know you, my lord.

Ld. Mal. Sir *Ruff*, I assure you, takes it bloody ill of you; if it had not been in my house, he swears he would have maul'd some of you. I don't know but he may send you a challenge.

Grang. I hope not so, my lord.

Ld. Mal. Nay, I'll make it up if I can.

Gay. My lord, you come very seasonably for the clearing of some difficulties that have happen'd to-night, in relation to your lady.

L. Mal. Lord! what does he mean?

Gay. I would vindicate her virtue as much as I can, from any unreasonable suspicions you may have of it upon my account;

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account; and therefore declare, in the presence of all
this good company, that I have no design upon any body
in't but this lady; and here I offer to marry her.

[To Maria.]

L. Mal. Nay then he does revenge himself indeed—
[Aside.]

Gay. What say you, madam?

L. Mal. Why, nothing, nothing in the world; poor
rogue! silence gives consent all the town over.

Gay. Madam, your ladyship's interest would go a great
way in persuading her. [To L. Mal.]

Ld. Mal. Nay, my wife will be for it, I'm sure.

L. Mal. Mr. Gayman, you may be sure of me—to
persuade her against it if I could. Would I might never
see his face again. [Aside.]

Ld. Mal. Well, we shall live so pure and merry at one
another's houses: would you were all married, gentle-
men; there's no making a friend throughly welcome, I
can tell you, without having a wife of one's own to re-
ceive them.

L. Su. O law! Mr. Granger, what if you and I should
make it the double marriage? [To Granger, who
has her.]

Grang. 'Tis an old play, madam, and will never take.

L. Su. The devil take him, I don't know what to
make of him. [She applies herself to Sir Symphony.]

L. Mal. I know your thoughts, Maria.

Gay. Come, madam, give me your hand.

Mar. Well, sir, you may repeat this rashness:

[Gives her hand.]

Gay. I may repeat of some things that are past; but I
can never do any thing with you to repent of.

L. Mal. How the tyrant triumphs! [Aside.]

Sir Sym. You see, madam, how happy you might make
your humble servant.

L. Su. O law! sir! you don't think so.

Ld. Mal. Hey day! here's my aunt upon the prick of
preferment too: Sir Symphony and she are agresing to go
to bed together.

L. Su.

L. Sa. Well, if it must be so——

[Gives Sir Symphony her hand.

Ld. Mal. Ay, ay, uncle *Symphony*, wish you joy of my aunt *Susan*.

Sir Sym. You do me the greatest honour in the world, madam.

Enter Siam.

Ld. Mal. Gad fo! here's *Siam* too; the more the merrier; we shall want company to dance at all these weddings: you shall be my partner, *Siam*.

Siam. Wou'd I were unmarried, upon the condition I never danc'd at a wedding again.

L. Mal. What's the matter now, *Siam*?

Siam. Why the captain has been drunkening with my lord all night, and coming home in one of his damn'd old humours, has beaten me black and blue, and turn'd me out of doors.

Enter Captain.

Gay. How's this, captain?

L. Tric. and all. We'll pull the old rogue to pieces; beat his wife!

Capt. Why *Dolly*, *Dolly*, you should bear with the failings of your lord and master——

Siam. I do bear with your failings, you know I do, you old fumbling fool you.

Capt. And not betray the secrets of my dukedom, the mysteries of our bed and board, *Dolly*.

Siam. I'll be plagu'd with you no longer: I'll give you a separate maintenance, and be rid of you.

Capt. I'll come in for my thirds, *Dolly*, that you know the law will allow me: but let's see your separate maintenance: I marry'd you only to maintain me; who marries an old woman for any thing else? and if I can make you maintain me, d'ye see, I don't much care whether I'm marry'd to you or no: but I know your grievances; you would have me begin to propagate, like a patriarch, at threescore, and try to do good in my generation: but who the devil can do good upon you? you are past it as

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well as I; and so faith let's have a dance, and agree upon
parting in the morning.

A D A N C E.

Gay. Well, *Granger*, you are still to continue a bache-
lor it seems.

Grang. Why, faith, sir, 'tis as much as a man can do
to secure a reputation in his own keeping; he need not
venture it in a woman's, especially when she stakes so
little against it: for in miscarriages of marriage, we fa-
vour still the weaker sex's faults:
So when the wife's abus'd, or husband horn'd,
The woman's pity'd, but the cuckold scorn'd.

E P L

E P I L O G U E:

Spoken by Mrs. BRACEGIRDLE.

SEE the effects of a poor maid's last pray'r,
Driw'n by mere want of husband to despair.
And, ladies, in a barren age as this is,
'Tis hard for all of us to have our wives.
She, for a time pretended to a wit;
And yet you see her project would not hit:
Let her example teach you, there's no urging
These sparks, to take an antiquated virgin:
They fear the growing cares of marry'd lives,
And venture——only on their neighbours' wives.
Be wise in time; set not too great a value
On your fine selves, and still stand, shall I, shall I?
For awhile the dreams of coach and fix deceive you,
The honest 'squire, despis'd, may chance to leave you:
And when poor maids are driven to petition,
We seldom find they better their condition:
Yet thus with some of you it daily happens;
You lose the beast, in hopes to get the trappings.
You scorn to stoop below a top gallant;
And all pretend to ride the elephant:
As if you had forgot the thing you want.
Tho' each lost hour you pass a fiery trial,
And ne'er refuse without a self-denial.
Led by the custom of the sex, you strive
To blind the world, while you yourselves deceive:
You may pretend a nice indifference;
But truth must still be truth, while sense is sense:
Disguise your inclinations as you can;
Let every woman's business is a man.

THE
FATAL MARRIAGE;
OR, THE
INNOCENT ADULTERY.

A P L A Y.

As it was Acted at the
THEATRE ROYAL,
By Their MAJESTIES SERVANTS,
In the YEAR 1694.

Pellex ego facta mariti.—

OVID.

I 6

T O

ANT. HAMMOND, Esq.

O F

S O M E R S H A M - P L A C E.

S I R,

I Have so many obligations upon me, that to bring in a fair account of my debts, is all that lies in the present power of my honesty: in the first place, I thankfully confess myself indebted to the good-nature of the town in general; then, in the deepest sense of my gratitude, I acknowledge the indulgence and patronage of particular men of quality, who were all most industrious and contriving for the fortune of this play; to make it considerable to the world in its reputation, and to me in the profit of the third day. I think it becomes every man's character to be pleased with pleasing others; and I know, that to be pleased, is full as much as I ought to be, upon the success of any thing that I can attempt in this kind;

kind ; my poetry will never run away with me ; but the good fortune of finding so many honourable patrons, I must confess, has transported me ; and if I am a little vain now, it is from their good opinion of me, and not from what I think of myself. I took the hint of the tragical part of this play from a novel of Mrs. Behn's, called *The Fair Vow-breaker* ; you will forgive me for calling it a hint, when you find I have little more than borrowed the question, how far such a distress was to be carried, upon the misfortune of a woman's having innocently two husbands at the same time ? I have given you a little taste of comedy with it, ~~not from my own opinion~~, but the present humour of the town : I never contend that, because I think every reasonable man will, and ought to govern in the pleasures he pays for. I had no occasion for the comedy, but in the three first acts, which Mrs. Bracegirdle particularly diverted, by the beauty and gaiety of her action ; and though I was fond of coming to the serious part, I should have been very well pleased (if it had been possible to have woven her into that interest) to have had her company to the end of my journey. I could not, if I would, conceal what I owe Mrs. Barry ; and I should despair of ever being able to pay her, if I did not imagine that I have been a little accessory to the great applause that every body gives her, in saying she out-plays herself ; if she does that, I think we may all agree never to expect, or desire any actor to go beyond that commendation. I made the play for her part, and her part has made the play for me ; it was a helpless infant in the arms of the father, but has grown

grown under her care ; I gave it just motion enough to crawl into the world, but by her power and spirit of playing, she has breathed a foul into it, that may keep it alive. I hope I have, in some measure, discharged myself to the public ; but for fear of the worst, sir, I have brought you for my security, because I always found you in nature inclining to be responsible for your friends : you have allowed me that title, and I thank you for it ; but I value myself upon your being as heartily disposed to give it, as I was desirous to receive it. I cannot but remember some passages, that would become your character, and this dedication of my friendship to you ; but I must be silent ; and it is the hard part of your favours, that you will not allow them to be acknowledged ; I can never speak enough to my obligation, and never little enough to your modesty ; when I would be grateful, I shall be troublesome ; and I know you too well, to think you will be pleased with what I can publicly say of you. Every man who knows you, will think I say very little ; and they who are to know you, will find I have said nothing. You are rising upon the world, and every creature is the better for you that is near you ; and as *Juvenal* says of his emperor, *Sat. 7.*

Materiamque tibi vestra indulgentia quærit:

I may speak of your virtues, and good qualities, though you will not allow me to be a witness to the world of the frequent occasions you have found out to employ them. If generosity with friendship, learning with sound sense, true wit, and humour, with good nature, be accomplishments

plishments to qualify a gentleman for a patron, I am sure I have lit right in Mr. *Hammond*. I have reason to think I have made you my friend ; and you shall have reason to believe that you have secured me to be,

SIR,

Your humble servant,

T. SOUTHERN.

P R O L O G U E:

Spoken by Mrs. BRACEGIRDLE.

WHEN once a poet settles an ill name,
Let him write well, or ill, 'tis all the same :
For critics now-a-days, like flocks of sheep,
All follow, when the first has made the leap.
And, do you justice, most are well inclin'd
To censure faults you know not how to find :
Some cavil at the style, and some the actors ;
For, right or wrong, we pass for malefactors.
Some well-bred persons carp at the decorum,
As if they bore the drawing-room before 'em.
Sometimes your soft respectful spark discovers,
Our ladies are too coming to their lovers ;
For they who still pursue, but ne'er enjoy,
In ev'ry case expect a siege of Troy.
There are some others too who offer battle,
And with their time and place, maul Aristotle.
Ask what they mean, and, after some grimace,
They tell you, twelve's the time ; and for the place,
The chocolate-house, at the looking-glass.
To please such judges, some have tir'd their brains,
And almost had their labour for their pains :
After a twelvemonth vainly spent in plotting,
These mottled critics cry 'tis good for nothing :
But wiser authors turn their plots upon you,
And plot to purpose when they get your money.

D R A.

Fred. O, you must expect to be disinherited twice or thrice, to try your obedience, before you're the better for him. But it happens unluckily at this time: what will become of the ladies?

Fab. 'Tis that troubles me: to be turn'd out of doors, when I had honestly undertaken the making my mother-in-law's and sister's fortune, as well as my own. I have promoted the design as far as I could: I hope you and *Carlos* will carry it on. There's a letter from my sister [Gives him a letter] to desire your assistance: I think she wants nothing but an opportunity of running away with you.

Fred. That I have settled in a letter to her. [Feeling for his letter] I have contriv'd her escape, but how to send it now—

Jaq. That, sir, I think, falls under my employment: let me alone for the letter.

Fab. There's an old gentleman coming this way will certainly deliver it.

Jaq. Gad, and so he shall: 'tis very well thought upon: sir, your most humble servant. The letter, the letter, sir; [To Frederick.] I'll do your business, I warrant you.

Fred. I have left it unfortunately behind me upon my table: *Jacqueline*, make haste and bring it me.

[*Jacqueline runs out.*]

Fab. I have it in my head to be reveng'd of this old fellow: run away with my sister, be sure, whatever you you do: rely upon the old man's conscience to give her a portion: all that I can do for you—is to pray (tho' I think there will be no great need of my prayers) that he will never give you a shilling. [Aside.] *Carlos*, I suppose, knows how to behave himself between a handsome young lady, my mother-in-law, and a coxcombly old fellow, my father. When we are all in rebellion, a general pardon must follow.

[Exit.]

Fernando enters to Frederick.

Fern. Sure I saw just now a glimpse of my rakely son shoot by the corner there: hark you, friend, was not one *Fabian* with you before I came? *Fred.*

Fred. Your son *Fabian*, sir? he was here but just now.

Fern. My son! hum! he may be your son, if you like him; for I disown him.

Fred. Ay, so I hear indeed: 'tis a thousand pities, a pretty gentleman, as he is—

Fern. A pretty gentleman! yes, truly, he's a very pretty gentleman: when you can find nothing that a coxcomb is good for, but to spend money, you cry, he's a pretty gentleman. What, I suppose you were with him last night, a serenading (as you pretty gentlemen call it;) but in my language, 'tis catterwawling; good for nothing but to disturb a civil neighbourhood, waken our wives into wicked wishes, and put 'em in mind of younger fellows than their husbands.

Fred. You mistake me, sir—

Fern. I don't know whether I mistake you: but I'm sure, among other his enormities of last night, had not a less rascal of the company interpos'd, that *Fabian* you speak of would have carry'd me bodily away with him, in the case of a base-viol.

Fred. Nay, then he is to blame indeed.

Fern. To blame, do you call it!

Fred. I hope I shall make you a better son, sir, if you please to accept of me: I have made my applications to you a great while.

Fern. Hold, hold, sir; I have plague enough with those children I have already; I want no more, I thank you. What, I warrant you, you'll say I have a handsome daughter; why, very well: and every body will say I have a handsome wife.

Fred. Yes, indeed sir, every body must say your wife is a very fine lady.

Fern. O, must they so? why how do I know then, that you han't as great a mind to my wife, as you have to my daughter? you look as if you would rather help to bring some more children into my family, than take any out of it: but I shall watch you for spoiling my wife's shape, I promise you. 'Tis very hard upon marry'd men, that's the truth, on't: 'tis a sin, and a shame, there should be so many ways of making a cuckold; when

when there are so few, or none to prevent it. Now are you going to put in a long answer to every particular, but I shall save you the trouble. [Going.

Fred. Sir, I shan't think it a trouble——

Fern. To make me a cuckold? no, no, I believe.

Fred. You won't understand me.

Fern. I do understand you.

Fred. Then, sir, I leave the business entirely to your prudence to manage according to your discretion.

Fern. Is the devil in the fellow? because I understand that he has a design upon my wife, he says, he leaves me to manage it according to my discretion. Why perhaps you expect I should pimp for you: are not you a very impudent fellow? or is this your way of proceeding with the husband? from this time forward you shall not so much as see my wife through a double-barr'd window; and to put you out of all other hopes, I will marry my daughter very shortly to a friend of my own that will deserve her. [Going.

Fred. Will you resolve without hearing me?

Jaqueline enters to 'em.

Fern. Resolve! why I do resolve to have nothing to say to you; to you, nor your rogue there, that follows you. Odd! that fellow looks very suspiciously.

Jaq. Sir, sir, say your pleasure of my master, or to my master; but don't disparage my countenance: what have you to say to my face?

Fern. Why, I don't like it.

Jaq. Nay, nay, if that be all——

Fern. But that is not all; I say moreover that you must be a very impudent fellow, that can keep such a face in countenance.

Jaq. Sir, I would have you to know, what it seems you are ignorant of, that whatever you take me to be, sir, I am a gentleman, sir.

Fern. Nay, keep your distance, friend, however. A gentleman, say you! like enough: take a pick-pocket into custody, and upon the first question of his roguery, he shall answer, I'm a gentleman. You never hear of a fellow to be hang'd, tho' for stealing a clean shirt, but he's

he's a gentleman ; and such a gentleman I could allow you to be, if you were going to the gallows.

[Fernando going.]

Jaq. What the devil shall I do with my letter ? sir, sir, under your favour one word ; I beg your pardon, sir ; if my master has said any thing to disoblige you — lord, sir, you lovers have bad memories — [To Frederick.] My master has forgot his main business with you, sir [To Fernando.] You have forgot the money you came about, sir. [To Frederick.]

Fern. Money, friend ! if you come about money, I can hear you.

Fred. What money do' st talk of ? I want no money.

Jaq. Pray, sir, pardon me ? I am your steward, and know your wants ; you do want — and I want — [Shows the letter, and makes signs.] Pox on him, he won't apprehend me.

Fred. There's something to be done with that letter : I don't understand him, but I'll give into't if I can — [Applying to Fernando.] I was loth to discover it, but the best estates may want money sometimes : you shall have what security —

[Jaqueline pins a letter to Fernando's coat behind.]

Fern. I am for a mortgage, or nothing — what a pox do you mean, gathering about me so ? Have you a design upon my person ?

Fred. Fie, fie, sir ; well, you minded what I said ?

Fern. Minded what you said ! I thank you, I had more occasion to mind what you did ; for ought I know I may be robb'd — [Fernando searching his pockets.]

Jaq. Of your daughter, in good time. [Aside.]

Fern. My pockets may be pick'd.

Jaq. Of a short pipe, and iron tobacco-box.

Fern. Very well, sir, this trick won't take.

Jaq. Yes, but it will, sir.

Fern. What then, you design'd to abuse me, to make me your property, your go-between ? ha ! what shall I do for you ? have you no commendation-token of your affection, or so, to my wife, nor daughter ? what, you have a letter ; I know. I shall certainly deliver it.

Jaq.

Jaq. That will be kind, indeed, when my master sends one along with you.

Fern. At any time, at any time.

Fred. I'm glad I know the way.

Fern. O, you can't miss it by me : you can't find such another for that purpose.

Jaq. By my troth, I think not, sir ; ha, ha, ha.

Fern. Do you laugh at your good fortune already ?

Jaq. I beg your pardon, sir, but I must laugh.

Fern. Do, do, try with the silly gentleman, your master, whether you can laugh me out of my daughter, or no. [Exit.

Jaq. I think I have bid fair for't.

Fred. 'Twas pretty well towards it, to make him carry the letter himself.

Jaq. There's no danger of its miscarrying ; the whole family is in a conspiracy against him ; and whoever gets it, will deliver it to *Vilazorta*.

Fred. I know *Fabian* will do any thing that's mischievous to assist me : go home, and desire him to stay for me : behave yourself handsomely in this business, and you shall be a gentleman in earnest. Who's here ? *Villeroy* and *Carlos* ; here, here, *Jacqueline*. [Whispers.

Enter *Villeroy* and *Carlos*.

Car. This constancy of yours will establish an immortal reputation among the women.

Vil. If it wou'd establish me with *Isabella*-----

Car. Follow her, follow her : *Troy town* was won at last.

Vil. I have follow'd her these seven years, and now but live in hopes.

Car. But live in hopes ! why, hope is the ready road, the lover's baiting-place, and, for ought you know, but one stage short of the possession of your mistress.

Vil. But my hopes, I fear, are more of my own making than hers : and proceed rather from my wishes, than any encouragement she has giv'n me.

Car. That I can't tell : the sex is very various : there are no certain measures to be prescrib'd, or follow'd, in

in making our approaches to the women. All that we have to do, I think, is to attempt 'em in the weakest part; press 'em but hard, and they will all fall under the necessity of a surrender at last. That favour comes at once; and sometimes when we least expect it.

Vil. I shall be glad to find it so.

Car. You will find it so. Every place is to be taken, that is not to be reliev'd: she must comply.

Vil. I'm going to visit her.

Car. What interest a brother-in-law can have with her, depend upon.

Vil. I know your interest, and I thank you. [Exit.

Car. Be sure of me to help the marriage forward. Why so, *Frederick*, am not I a very honest fellow, to endeavour to provide a good husband for my elder brother's widow?

Fred. A very kind relation indeed: you'll give your consent to the match, where you are to have the benefit of the bargain.

Car. Tho' I have taken care to root her out of our family, I wou'd transplant her into *Villeroy's*

Fred. That has a face of good nature; but it squints with both eyes upon your own interest.

Car. That trick I learn'd in the schools, in your company, when I was a younger brother, and designed for the church.

Fred. The church is a very good school: there are wise men and fools of every foundation: but there are lessons for every learner; doctrines for all disciples, and calculated to all capacities, to thrive or starve by, as they are able to digest 'em. The church will teach us to rise in this world as well as in the next, if we have but grace to follow her example.

Car. I think I have taken care to improve the principles I receiv'd from her. What did they turn me into a trade for, but to thrive by the mystery? and cheating is the mystery in all the professions I know of.

Fred. I have a great deal of news for you, about *Fernando* and his family; the wife and daughter are in dis-

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tress we must have mercy on Emma : When you have se-
cur'd the main matter of Villery and Isabella, Julia des-
ires to fall under your considerations.
Car. I'm something busy at present ; but I'll take care
of her. [Exit.

S C E N E Fernando's house.

Enter Julia and Victoria.

Jul. Here's your father behind us.

Vic. I hope the old eves-dropper has not over-heard
me.

Enter Fernando, with the note pin'd to his coat.

Fern. Who's that dare talk of love in my house ? it
shall be treason to mention it.

Jul. Your own jealous suspicion ; here's nothing of
love in this house to be talk'd of.

Fern. My own jealous suspicion ! it may be so ; how-
ever, I shall take an occasion to search my house, from
the garret to the cellar ; and if I do find any love in it,
or any thing towards, to encourage it —

Vic. In the cellar, sir ! what shou'd you find there ?
cold meat, and small beer are no great provocatives ;
won't you allow us to eat and drink, father ?

Fern. To eat and drink, father ! thou art always cram-
ming, by thy good will : that jade's gut wou'd ruin a
little fortune ; wou'd any, but I, were obliged to provide
for it. Let me see, I don't know but, in my absence,
you may have let in some rascal or another, and bid
him —

Jul. Why don't you look under the table ?

Fern. There's something going forward against me, I
know, gentlewomen, by your always being together :
come, come, what's the contrivance ? let me know your
design, I'll tell you whether 'twill prosper, or no.

Jul. In short husband, I must tell you, your jealousy
has quite tir'd me, and I can live no longer under your
tyrannical government.

Fern.

Fern. Very well; mine is a tyrannical government! and why, I pray? because it refuses you the privilege of making me a cuckold: a pretty privilege truly! and you will plead it as often you can, no doubt on't; but I shall watch you. [Victoria spies the letter.]

Vic. Hey day! what merry company has my father been in?

Fern. Why, do you find me in so merry an humour, mistress?

Vic. In a humour to entertain us, I see, sir. Some body has play'd the rogue with him. [Aside.] I'll try to read it —

Fern. The spirit of rebellion has been among you in my absence, to persuade you to resist my lawful authority: but whether that spirit appear'd in the simple shape of a letter only, or in the more lewd limbs of a lover, you know best —

Jul. I know nothing. [Turning from him.]

Fern. Look you, wife, if there is a necessity for doing it, do it the cheapest way: your expresses, your letter-carriers, will cost money: ah! wou'd I cou'd light upon one of those letter-carriers, I wou'd so pay 'em.

Vic. 'Tis directed to me — I had almost spoil'd all. [Takes the letter off.]

Fern. What is that wench doing behind me there? no good I warrant her.

Vic. Nothing, sir, but some fool or other has been chalking you upon the back. [Rubs him.]

Fern. O! 'twas that rogue Frederick's man: I felt him indeed fumbling about me when his master whisper'd me: but I shall take an occasion to score him over the coxcomb, when I see him again.

Vic. Did he send it, father?

Fern. Send what, daughter! wou'd you have had him seat any thing? I cou'd do no more than offer my service: he did not like the conveyance, I suppose; and so you are disappointed.

Vic. Not I indeed, father, I'm not disappointed; I have as much as I expected, or desir'd.

Fern. As much as you expected, or desir'd!

Vil. What have I to do with him?

Fern. Ah! gypsy! you don't know what you have to do with him? nor you don't desire to be instructed? but if you are ignorant, here's a woman of experience; your mother can inform you, she has something to do with him, if you han't. Get you gone to your several chambers, go. I'll bring you news from your fellows; rely upon me for your intelligence; I'll do your business, I warrant you. [Thrusts 'em in before him.

S C E N E *the street.*

Villeroy, with Isabella and her little Son.

Isa. Why do you follow me? you know, I am
A bankrupt every way; too far engag'd
Ever to make return; I own you've been
More than a brother to me, been my friend;
And at a time, when friends are found no more;
A friend to my misfortunes.

Vil. I must be
Always your friend.

Isa. I have known, and found you
Truly my friend; and wou'd I cou'd be yours:
But the unfortunate cannot be friends:
Fate watches the first motion of the soul,
To disappoint our wishes; if we pray
For blessings, they prove curses in the end,
To ruin all about us. Pray be gone,
Take warning, and be happy.

Vil. Happiness!
There's none for me, without you: riches, name,
Health, fame, distinction, place, and quality,
As the incumbrances of groaning life.
To make it but more tedious, without you;
What serve the goods of fortune for; to raise
My hopes, that you at last will share 'em with me.
Long life itself, the universal prayer,
And heav'n's reward of well-deservers here,
Wou'd prove a plague to me; to see you always,

And

And never see you mine ! still to desire,
And never to enjoy !

I/a. I must not hear you.

Vil. Thus, at this awful distance, I have serv'd
A seven years bondage——Do I call it bondage,
When I can never wish to be redeem'd ?
No, let me rather linger out a life
Of expectation, that you may be mine,
Than be restor'd to the indifference
Of seeing you without this pleasing pain.
I've lost myself, and never wou'd be found,
But in these arms.

I/a. O, I have heard all this !

—But must no more——the charmer is no more.
My bury'd husband rises in the face
Of my dear boy, and chides me for my stay :
Can't thou forgive me, child ?

Cbld. Why, have you done a fault ? you cry as if you
had : indeed now, I have done nothing to offend you :
but if you kiss me, and look so very sad upon me, I shall
cry too.

I/a. My little angel, no, you must not cry ;
Sorrow will overtake thy steps too soon ;
I shou'd not hasten it.

Vil. What can I say !

The arguments that make against my hopes
Prevail upon my heart, and fix me more ;
Those pious tears you hourly throw away
Upon the grave, have all their quick'ning charms,
And more engage my love, to make you mine.
When yet a virgin, free, and indispos'd,
I lov'd, but saw you only with my eyes ; -
I could not reach the beauties of your soul :
I have since liv'd in contemplation,
And long experience of your growing goodness :
What then was passion, is my judgment now,
Thro' all the several changes of your life,
Confirm'd, and settled in adoring you.

I/a. Nay, then I must be gone : if you're my friend,

If you regard my little interest,
 No more of this; you see, I grant you all
 That friendship will allow: be still my friend;
 That's all I can receive, or have to give.
 I'm going to my father: he needs not an excuse
 To use me ill; pray leave me to the trial.
Wil. I'm only born to be what you wou'd have me;
 The creature of your power, and must obey,
 In every thing obey you. I am going:
 But all good fortune go along with you. [Exit.
Ifa. I shall need all your wishes— [Knocks.
 Lo k'd! and fast!
 Where is the charity that us'd to stand,
 In our forefathers hospitable days,
 At great men's doors, ready for our wants,
 Like the good angel of the family,
 With open arms taking the needy in,
 To feed and clothe, to comfort, and relieve 'em?
 Now ev'n their gates are shut against the poor.

{She knocks again.

Enter Sampson to her.

Sam. Well, what's to do now, I trow? you knock so hard, as if you were invited; and that's more than a year of: but I can tell you, you may look twice about you for a welcome in a great man's family, before you and it; unless you bring it along with you.

Ifa. I hope I bring my welcome along with me. Is your lord at home?

Sam. My lord at home?

Ifa. Count Baldwin lives here still?

Sam. Ay, ay, count Baldwin does live here: and I am his porter, but what's that to the purpose, good woman, of my lord's being at home? if you had enquir'd for Mrs. Comfit, the house-keeper, or had the good fortune to be acquainted with the butler, you might have what you came for; and I cou'd make you an answer: but for my lord's being at home to every idle body that enquires for him—

Ifa. Why, don't you know me, friend?

Sam.

Sam. Not I, not I, mistress ; I may have seen you before, or so : but men of employment must forget their acquaintances ; especially such as we are never to be the better for.

Ging to shut the Door, Nurse enters, having overheard him.

Nurse. Handsomer words would become you, and mend your manners, Sampson : do you know who you prate to ?

Ifa. I'm glad you know me, Nurse.

Nurse. Marry, Heav'n forbid, madam, that I should ever forget you, or my little Jewel — [Isabella goes in with her Child.] Now my blessing go along with you wherever you go, or whatever you are about. Fie, Sampson, how could'st thou be such a Saracen ? A Turk would have been a better Christian, than to have done so barbarously by so good a lady.

Sam. Why look you, Nurse, I know you of old : by your good will you would have a finger in every bodies pie ; but mark the end on't ; if I am called to account about it, I know what I have to say.

Nurse. Marry come up here ! say your pleasure, and spare not. Refuse his eldest son's widow, and poor child, the comfort of seeing him ! she does not trouble him so often.

Sam. Not that I am against it, Nurse ; but we are but servants you know : we must have no likings, but our lord's ; and must do as we are ordered.

Nurse. Nay, that's true, Sampson.

Sam. Besides, what I did was all for the best : I have no ill will to the young lady, as a body may say, upon my own account ; only that I hear she it poor ; and indeed, I naturally hate your decay'd gentry : they expect as much waiting upon as when they had money in their pockets, and were able to consider us for the trouble.

Nurse. Why, that is a grievance, indeed, in great families ; where the gifts at good times are better than the wages : it would do well to be reform'd.

Sam. But what is the business, Nurse ? you have been in the family, before I came into the world : what's

the reason, pray, that this daughter-in-law, who has so good a report in every body's mouth, is so little set by, by my lord?

Nurse. Why, I'll tell you, Sampson; more nor less, I'll tell the truth; that's my way, you know, without adding or diminishing.

Sam. Ay, marry, Nurse.

Nurse. My lord's eldest son, *Biron* by name, the son of his bosom, and the son that he would have lov'd best, if he had as many as king *Pyramus* of *Troy*.

Sam. How! king *Pyramus* of *Troy*! why how many had he?

Nurse. Why the ballad sings he had fifty sons: but no matter for that. This *Biron*, as I was saying, was a lovely sweet gentleman, and indeed, nobody could blame his father for loving him: he was a son for the king of *Spain*, God bless him; for I was his Nurse. But now I come to the point, Sampson; this *Biron*, without asking the advice of his friends, hand-over head, as young men will have their vagaries, not having the fear of his father before his eyes, as I may say, wilfully marries this *Ambella*.

Sam. How wilfully! he should have had her consent, methinks.

Nurse. No, wilfully marries her; and, which was worse, after she had settled all her fortune upon a nunnery, which she broke out of to run away with him. They say they had the church's forgiveness, but I had rather it had been his father's.

Sam. Why in good troth, these nunneries, I see no good they do. I think the young lady was in the right to run away from a nunnery: and I think our young master was not in the wrong, but in marrying without a portion.

Nurse. That was the quarrel, I believe, Sampson: upon this, my old lord would never see him; disinherited him; took his younger brother *Carlos* into favour, whom he never car'd for before; and at last forc'd *Biron* to go to the siege of *Candy*, where he was kill'd.

Sam. A-lack-a-day, poor gentleman.

Nurse.

Nurse. For which my old lord hates her, as if she had been the cause of his going thither.

Sam. Alas, alas, poor lady, she has suffer'd for't : she has liv'd a great while a widow.

Nurse. A great while indeed for a young woman,
Sampson.

Sam. Gad so, here they come, I won't venture to be seen.

Enter Count Baldwin, followed by Isabella and her Child.

C. Bald. Whoever of your friends directed you,
Misguided, and abus'd you, there's your way —
I can afford to shew you out again.
What could you expect from me ?

Isz. O, I have nothing to expect on earth !
But misery is very apt to talk :
I thought I might be heard.

C. Bald. What can you say ?
Is there in eloquence, can there be in words
A recompensing pow'r, a remedy,
A reparation of the injuries,
The great calamities, that you have brought
On me, and mine ? You have destroy'd those hopes,
I fondly rais'd, through my declining life,
To rest my age upon ; and most undone me.

Isz. I have undone myself too.

C. Bald. Speak again :
Say still you are undone, and I will hear you :
With pleasure hear you.

Isz. Would my ruin please you ?

C. Bald. Beyond all other pleasures..

Isz. Then you are pleas'd — for I am most undone.

C. Bald. I pray'd but for revenge, and Heav'n has heard,
And sent it to my wishes : these grey hairs
Would have gone down in sorrow to the grave,
Which you have dug for me, without the thought,
The thought of leaving you more wretched here.

Isz. Indeed I am most wretched — When I lost
My husband —

C. Bald. Would he had never been ;
Or never had been yours.

I/a. I then believ'd
The measure of my sorrow then was full :
But every moment of my growing days.
Makes room for woes, and adds 'em to the sum.
I lost with *Biron* all the joys of life :
But now its last supporting means are gone :
All the kind helps that Heav'n in pity rais'd,
In charitable pity to our wants,
At last have left us : now bereft of all,
But this last trial of a cruel father,
To save us both from sinking. O my child !
Kneel with me, knock at nature in his heart :
Let the resemblance of a once-loy'd son
Speak in this little one, who never wrong'd you,
And plead the fatherless and widow's cause.
O, if you ever hope to be forgiven,
As you will need to be forgiven too,
Forget our faults, that Heav'n may pardon yours.

C. Bald. How dare you mention Heav'n ! call to mind
Your perjur'd vows ; your plighted, broken faith
To Heav'n, and all things holy ; were you not
Devoted, wedded to a life recluse,
The sacred habit on, protest and sworn
A votary for ever ? Can you think
The sacrilegious wretch, that robs the shrine,
Is thunder proof ?

I/a. There, there began my woes : -
Let women all take warning of my fate,
Never resolve, or think they can be safe
Within the reach and tongues of tempting men.
O ! had I never seen my *Biron*'s face ;
Had he not tempted me, I had not fall'n,
But still continu'd innocent, and free
Of a bad world, which only he had pow'r
To reconcile, and make me try again.

C. Bald. Your own inconstancy, your graceless thoughts
Debauch'd and reconcil'd you to the world :
He had no hand to bring you back again.

But

But what you gave him. *Circe, you prevail'd
Upon his honest mind, transforming him
From virtue, and himself, into what shapes
You had occasion for; and what he did
Was first inspir'd by you.* A cloyster was
Too narrow for the work you had in hand;
Your business was more general; the *wl ole world*
To be the scene: therefore you spread your charms
To catch his soul, to be the instrument,
The wicked instrument of your cursed flight.
Not that you valu'd him; for any one,
Who could have serv'd that turn, had been as welcome.

Ifa. O! I have sins to Heav'n, but none to him.

C. Bald. Had my wretched son
Marry'd a beggar's bastard; taken her
Out of her rags, and made her of my blood;
The mischief might have ceas'd, and ended there.
But bringing you into a family,
Entails a curse upon the name, and house,
That takes you in: the only part of me
That did receive you, perish'd for his crime:
'Tis a defiance to offended Heav'n,
Barely to pity you: your sins pursue you;
The heaviest judgments that can fall upon you,
Are your just lot, and but prepare your doom:
Expect 'em, and despair——firrah, rogue,
How durst thou disobey me! [To the Porter.]

Ifa. Not for myself—for I am past the hopes
Of being heard—but for this innocent—
And then I never will disturb you more.

C. Bald. I almost pity the unhappy child:
But being yours——

Ifa. Look on him as your son's;
And let his part in him answer for mine.
O save, defend him, save him from the wrongs
That fall upon the poor.

C. Bald. It touches me——
And I will save him——But to keep him safe;
Never come near him more.

K. 6. 2d. 2d. 2d. 2d. 2d.

Wat

Ifa. What! take him from me!
 No, we must never part: 'tis the last hold
 Of comfort I have left, and when he fails,
 All goes along with him: O! could you be
 The tyrant to divorce life from my life?
 I live but in my child.
 No, let me pray in vain, and beg my bread
 From door to door, to feed his daily wants,
 Rather than always lose him.

C. Bald. Then have your child, and feed him with
 your prayer.

You, rascal, slave; what do I keep you for?
 How came this woman in?

Sam. Why indeed, my lord, I did as good as tell her
 before, my thoughts upon the matter—

C. Bald. Did you so, sir? now then tell her mine:
 Tell her I sent you to her. [He pushes him towards her.
 There's one more to provide her.

Sam. Good my Lord, what I did was in perfect obe-
 dience to the old Nurse there; I told her what it would
 come to.

C. Bald. What! this was a plot upon me. Mumper,
 you, were you in the conspiracy? be gone, go all toge-
 ther; I have provided you an equipage, now set up when
 you please. She's old enough to do you service: I have
 none for her. The wide world lies before you: be gone,
 take any road, but this, to beg or starve in: I shall be
 glad to hear of you: but never see me more.

{He drives 'em off before him.

A C T

A C T II. S C E N E I.

Enter Villeroy and Carlos.

Car. THE part I act in your interest, goes against
the grain of my good nature and conscience :
but since 'tis necessary to your service, and will be my
sister's advantage in the end, I'm better reconcil'd to
it.

Vil. My interest !
O never think I can intend to raise
An interest from *Isabella's* wrongs.
Your father may have interested ends,
In her undoing ; but my heart has none.
Her happiness must be my interest,
And that I would restore.

Car. Why so I mean.
These hardships that my father lays upon her,
I'm sorry for ; and wish I could prevent :
But he will have his way.
Since there was nothing to be hop'd from her prosperity,
the change of her fortune may alter the condition of
her thoughts, and make at last for you.

Vil. She is above her fortune.
Car. Try her again. Women commonly love according
to the circumstances they are in.

Vil. Common women may.

Car. Since you are not accessory to the injustice, you
may be persuaded to take the advantage of other people's
crimes.

Vil. I must despise all those advantages,
That indirectly can advance my love.
No, tho' I live but in the hopes of her,
And languish for th' enjoyment of those hopes ;
I'd rather pine in a consuming want
Of what I wish, than have the blessing mine,
From any reason, but consenting love.
O ! let me never have it to remember ;

I could

I cou'd betray her, coldly to comply :
 When a clear, generous choice bestows her on me,
 I know to value the unequal'd gift :
 I would not have it, but to value it.

Car. Take your own way ; remember, what I offer'd
 came from a friend.

Vil. I understand it so. I'll serve her for herself,
 without the thought of a reward. [Exit.]

Car. Agree that point between you. If you marry
 her any way, you do my busines.

Enter Frederick and Jacqueline to him.

Fred. Well, all goes well; I hope.

Car. As I cou'd wish. I can't stay with you : I must
 be near, if occasion be, to lend a helping hand : when
 this marriage is over, I design to come in for a snack of
Fernando's family. [Exit.]

Fred. The more the merrier, his wife says. I hope to
 dispose of the daughter myself.

Jaq. You men of intrigue are commonly look'd upon
 to be the idle part of mankind, that have nothing to do :
 now I am of a contrary opinion —

Fred. Why so, Jacqueline ?

Jaq. Because a right good wheremaster is never at the
 end of his busines.

Enter Fabian in a friar's habit.

Fred. How ! Fabian turn'd friar ?

Fab. As you see, *Fredrick*; you will all come to a se-
 rious sense of your sins one time or another, as I have
 done. I have had a good father, and I have been an un-
 gracious boy to him ; that's the truth on't. Therefore
 to make him what satisfaction I can for my past faults,
 I have taken this habit, with an intention to pray for
 him —

Fred. Why thou art not mad, *Fabian* ?

Fab. Not mad of a monastery, I assure you. I am ne-
 ver the nearer being a saint, for putting on the habit of
 piety ! the profession and the practice of it are two things
 in the schools ; and wise men distinguish 'em into several
 interests.

interests. In short, I have told our honest abbot the whole history of my father's jealousy, covetousness, and hard-heartedness to his wife and children; he, good man, making it a point of conscience to contribute as much as he can to a work of charity, has given me leave to put on this habit, for the carrying on the method of his care.

Fred. But what do you propose by this?

Fab. Why, I propose that every body shall be the better for it but my father. For, upon the credit of this my reformation, believing, from my cloathing, that I shall have no more occasion for the transitory things of this world, his pocket will plead for me, and the old fellow take me into favour again.

Fred. That's something indeed.

Fab. Then, in the first place, if you miscarry to-night in your design upon my sister, I shall be able to deliver a letter, and bring it about another time.

Fred. Very well.

Fab. Secondly, I intend to put the means honestly into my mother's hands, to make my father a cuckold if she pleases.

Jaq. These are very good reasons indeed, sir.

Fab. Besides these advantages to the public, I have a private reason of my own, to be reveng'd upon the person of the old gentleman. I must not discover too much of my contrivance, for fear of lessening the pleasure in bringing it about—I shall have occasion of some witty rogue, that can be mischievous, when there's no danger: I think that's pretty near your character, Jaqueline.

Jaq. O, sir, you do me too much honour.

Fab. Can't you spare him a little?

Fred. Not well to-night: to-morrow—

Fab. Will do my business. I have one part of my farce the friars will scruple a little: Jaqueline must act that: the whole fraternity are concern'd in my plot, I assure you.

Jaq. I'm glad to hear that, sir; I love a plot where the clergy's concern'd: they will always be sure of the benefit,

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benefit, without the danger of the beating : I am mainly
of their principles.

Fab. I am something in haste at present :
To-morrow you shall know more. [Exit.

S C E N E. Isabella's House.

Enter Isabella and Nurse. Isabella's little Son at play upon
the floor.

I/a. Sooner or later all things pass away,
And are no more : the beggar and the king,
With equal steps, tread forward to their end :
Tho' they appear of different natures now ;
Not of the same day's work of Providence ;
They meet at last ; the reconciling grave
Swallows distinction first, that made us foes,
Then all alike lie down in peace together.
When will that hour of peace arrive for me !
In heav'n I shall find it—not in heav'n,
If my old tyrant father can dispose
Of things above—but, there, his interest
May be as poor as mine, and want a friend
As much as I do here.

[Weeping.

Nur/s. Good madam, be comforted.

I/a. Do I deserve to be this outcast wretch ?
Abandon'd thus, and lost ? But 'tis my lot,
The will of heav'n, and I must not complain :
I will not for myself : let me bear all
The violence of your wrath ; but spare my child :
Let not my sins be visited on him :
They are ; they must ; a general ruin falls
On every thing about me : thou art lost,
Poor Nurse, by being near me.

Nur/s. I can work, or beg, to do you service.

I/a. Cou'd I forget
What I have been, I might the better bear
What I am destin'd to : I'm not the first
That have been wretched : but to think how much
I have been happier!—wild burrying thoughts

Start

Start every way from my distracted soul,
To find out hope, and only meet despair.
What answer have I ?

Enter Sampson.

Sam. Why truly very little to the purpose : like a few
as he is, he says you have had more already than the jew-
els are worth : he wishes you wou'd rather think of re-
deeming 'em, than expect any more money upon 'em.

I/a. 'Tis very well — [Exit Sampson.

So : poverty at home, and debts abroad !
My present fortune bad ; my hopes yet worse !
What will become of me ! —
This ring is all I've left of value now :
'Twas given me by my husband ; his first gift
Upon our marriage : I have always kept it,
With my best care, the treasure next my life ;
And now but part with it to support life :
Which only can be dearer. Take it nurse,
'Twill stop the cries of hunger for a time ;
Provide us bread ; and bring a short reprieve,
— To put off the bad day of beggary,
That will come on too soon. Take care of it ;
Manage it, as the last remaining friend,
That would relieve us. [Exit Nurse.] Heav'n can only tell
Where we shall find another — My dear boy !
The labour of his birth was lighter to me
Than of my fondness now ; my fears for him
Are more, than in that hour of hovering death,
They cou'd be for myself — He minds me not.
His little sports have taken up his thoughts :
O may they never feel the pangs of mine.
Thinking will make me mad : why must I think,
When no thought brings me comfort ?

Nurse returns.

Nurse. O madam ! you are utterly ruin'd, and undone,
your creditors of all kinds are come in upon you ; they
have muster'd up a regiment of rogues, that are come to
plunder

plunder your house, and seize upon all you have in the world, they are below, what will you do, madam?

I/a. Do! nothing, no, for I am born to suffer.

Enter Carlos to her.

Car. O sister! can I call you by that name,
And be the son of this inhuman man,
Inveterate to your ruin? Do not think
I am a-kin to his barbarity?
I must abhor my father's usage of you:
And from my bleeding honest heart, must pity,
Pity your lost condition. Can you think
Of any way that I may serve you in?
But what enrages most my sense of grief,
My sorrow for your wrongs, is, that my father,
Fore-knowing well the storm that was to fall,
Has order'd me not to appear for you.

I/a. I thank your pity; my poor husband fell
For disobeying him: do not you stay
To venture his displeasure too for me.

Car. You must resolve on something——

[*Exit.*]

I/a. Let my fate
Determine for me; I shall be prepar'd.
The worst that can befall me, is to die:
When once it comes to that, it matters not
Which way 'tis brought about: whether I starve,
Or hang, or drown, the end is still the same;
Plagues, poison, famine, are but several names
Of the same thing, and all conclude in death.

— But sudden death! O for a sudden death,
To cheat my persecutors of their hopes,
Th' expected pleasure of beholding me
Long in my pains, ling'ring in misery.
It will not be; that is deny'd me too.
Hark, they are coming; let the torrent roar,
It can but overwhelm me in its fall;
And life and death are now alike to me.

[*Exeunt, the Nurse leading the Child.*

S C E N E

S C E N E opens, and *shevr Carlos and Villeroy with the Officers.*

Vil. No farther violence —

The debt in all is but four thousand crowns ;
Were it ten times the sum, I think you know
My fortune very well can answer it.

You have my word for this : I'll see you paid.

Off. That's as much as we can desire : so we have the
money, no matter whence it comes.

Vil. To morrow you shall have it.

Car. Thus far all's well. ——

Enter Isabella, and Nurse with the Child.

And now my sister comes to crown the work. [Aside.

I/a. Where are these rav'ning blood-hounds, that pur-
sue

In a full cry, gaping to swallow me ?
I meet your rage, and come to be devour'd :
Say, which way are you to dispose of me ?
To dungeons, darkness, death !

Car. Have patience.

I/a. Patience !

Off. You'll excuse us, we are but in our office ; debts
must be paid.

I/a. My death will pay you all. [Distractedly.

Off. While there is law to be had, people will have
their own.

Vil. 'Tis very fit they should ; but pray begone.

To-morrow certainly. [Exeunt Officers.

I/a. What of to-morrow ?

Am I then the sport,
The game of fortune, and her laughing fools ?
The common spectacle, to be expos'd
From day to day, and baited for the mirth
Of the lewd rabble ? Must I be reserv'd
For fresh afflictions ?

Vil. For long happiness
Of life, I hope.

I/a.

Ifa. There is no hope for me.

The load grows light, when we resolve to bear :
I'm ready for my trial.

Car. Pray be calm,
And know your friends.

Ifa. My friends ! have I a friend ?

Car. A faithful friend ; in your extremest need
Villeroy came in to save you.—

Ifa. Save me ! how ?

Car. By satisfying all your creditors.

Ifa. Which way ? for what ?

Vil. Let me be understood,
And then condemn me : you have giv'n me leave
To be your friend ; and in that only name,
I now appear before you. I could wish,
There had been no occasion of a friend,
Because I know you shy to be oblig'd ;
And still more loth to be oblig'd by me.

Ifa. 'Twas that I would avoid —

[*Afids.*

Vil. I'm most unhappy, that my services
Can be suspected to design upon you ;
I have no farther ends than to redeem you
From fortune's wrongs ; to shew myself at last,
What I have long profess'd to be, your friend :
Allow me that ; and to convince you more,
That I intend only your interest,
Forgive what I have done, and in amends
(If that can make you any that can please you)
I'll tear myself for ever from my hopes ;
Stifle this flaming passion in my soul,
That has so long broke out to trouble you,
And mention my unlucky love no more.

Ifa. This generosity will ruin me—

[*Afids.*

Vil. Nay, if the blessing of my looking on you
Disturbs your peace, I will do all I can
To keep away, and never see you more.

Car. You must not go.

Vil. Could *Iabella* speak

These few short words, I should be rooted here :
And never move but upon her commands.

Car.

Car. Speak to him, sister ; do not throw away
 A fortune that invites you to be happy.
 In your extremity he begs your love ;
 And has deserv'd it nobly. Think upon
 Your lost condition, helpless and alone.
 Tho' now you have a friend, the time must come
 That you will want one ; him you may secure
 To be a friend, a father, husband to you.

Isa. A husband !

Car. You have discharg'd your duty to the dead,
 And to the living ; 'tis a wilfulness
 Not to give way to your necessities,
 That force you to this marriage.

Nurse. What must become of this poor innocence ?

[To the child.]

Car. He wants a father to protect his youth,
 And rear him up to virtue. You must bear
 The future blame, and answer to the world,
 When you refuse the easy honest means
 Of taking care of him.

Nurse. Of him, and me,
 And every one, that must depend upon you :
 Unless you please now to provide for us,
 We must all perish.

Car. Nor would I press you —

Isa. Do not think I need

Your reasons, to confirm my gratitude.
 I have a soul that's throughly sensible,
 Of your great worth, and busy to contrive,
 If possible, to make you a return.

[To Vil.]

Vil. O ! easily possible !

Isa. It cannot be your way : my pleasures are
 Bury'd, and cold in my dead husband's grave.
 And I should wrong the truth, myself, and you,
 To say that I can ever love again.

I owe this declaration to myself :

But as a proof that I owe all to you,

If after what I've said, you can resolve

To think me worth your love — where am I going ?

You cannot think it ; 'tis impossible.

Vil.

Vil. Impossible!

Ifa. You should not ask me now, nor should I grant.
I am so much oblig'd, that to consent
Wou'd want a name to recommend the gift.
'Twould shew me poor, indebted, and compell'd,
Designing, mercenary; and I know
You would not wish to think I could be bought.

Vil. Be bought! where is the price that can pretend
To bargain for you? Not in fortune's power.
The joys of heav'n, and love, must be bestow'd:
They are not to be sold, and cannot be deserv'd.

Ifa. Some other time I'll hear you on this subject.

Vil. Nay, then there is no time so fit for me,

[*Following her.*

Since you consent to hear me, hear me now;
That you may grant: you are above
The little forms, which circumscribe your sex:
We differ but in time, let that be mine.

Ifa. You think fit
To get the better of me, and you shall;
Since you will have it so—I will be yours.

Vil. I take you at your word.

Ifa. I give you all,
My hand; and would I had a heart to give:
But if it ever can return again,
'Tis wholly yours.

Vil. O ecstasy of joy!
Leave that to me. If all my services,
If prosperous days, and kind indulging nights,
If all that man can fondly say, or do,
Can beget love, love shall be born again.

O Carlos! now my friend, and brother too:
And Nurse, I have eternal thanks for thee.

Send for the priest— [Nurse goes in haste.
This night you must be mine.
Let me command in this, and all my life
Shall be devoted to you.

Ifa. On your word
Never to press me to put off these weeds,

Which

Which best become my melancholy thoughts,
You shall command me.

Vil. Witness heav'n and earth
Against my soul, when I do any thing
To give you a disquiet

Car. I long to wish you joy.

Vil. You'll be a witness of my happiness!

Car. For once I'll be my sister's father,
And give her to you.

Vil. Next my Isabella,
Be near my heart: I am for ever yours.

[Exeunt.

S C E N E the Street before Fernando's House.

Enter Frederick and Jacqueline, with a dark-lanthorn, and
a ladder of ropes.

Fred. Well! this is the time, and that's the window.

Jaq. And here is a ladder to put her in mind of her
fortune.

Fred. How's that, firrah?

Jaq. Why, lord sir, if the gentlewoman be mad enough
to run away from her father upon your account, she'll
carry the frolick a little farther, in a fortnight, and hang
herself upon her own.

Fred. Why, you rogue, I'm in love with her.

Jaq. I am but your poor servant, sir, and if you com-
mand me to believe you, 'tis another thing. But I know
what your love commonly ends in—

Fred. In what, sir?

Jaq. In a week, sir; but that's her busness, and not
mine; unless the spirit of your revenge rises upon the
folly of her pride, and frightens her into the consideration
of your humble servant Jacqueline.

Fred. O! you are witty, sir!—The window opens.

[Victoria above, a night-gown over her man's chair.

Vic. I heard a noise! I'll listen.

Fred. Victoria!—

Vic. Here am I, expecting the 'good hour, boy or
girl, chuse you whether, so we once but come together.

Jaq.

Jaq. Here's your deliverance in a halter, madam, a ladder of ropes for you. [Thrown up to her,

Vi&t. I had rather have it in a halter, than stay where I am: give it me.

Fred. Be sure you fasten it above.

Vi&t. Any thing to get loose below.

Jaq. O the discretion of a girl! she will be a slave to any thing that has not a title to make her one. If my master does commit matrimony, which he is not much addicted to, 'tis but changing a father for a husband; removing from one prison to another; but that has appearance of liberty for the time, tho' it ends in a worse confinement at last.

Vi&t. Well! the ladder that is to convey me is ready; but before I part with this world 'twould be but reasonable to have a little consolation to encourage my journey to the next. What am I to trust to when I come there?

Jaq. My master, madam, my master; what should you trust to? You can't trust an honest gentleman, — who, to my knowledge, will most infallibly break his word with you. [Aside.]

Fred. What should you trust to but yourself, child? Rely upon your beauty: 'twere a disparagement of that, to talk of conditions, when you are certain of making your own terms.

Vi&t. Nay, now is my time indeed, and 'twill be my own fault if I don't: I shall shift, as my neighbours daughters have done before me, if I am left to the wide world. But *Frederick*, as to your particular.

Fred. Why, my particular is at your service, and pray come down and be satisfied; lord here's such ado to persuade a woman to her liberty.

Vi&t. I'm answer'd, I'm answer'd, and coming down as fast as I can: any thing to get rid of this father.

Fernando enters to her armed, and turns her away from the window.

Fern. Say you so, gentlewoman?

Vi&t. Undone, and ruin'd! what shall I do?

Fern.

Fern. I'll tell you what you shall do ; get you in huffy, go.—Now will I personate this hopeful young jade; and by that means discover the whole intrigue.

Jaq. What's that ?

Fred. What's what ? where ?

Jaq. There's certainly a noise at the window above. I'll turn the blind side of my lanthorn, for fear of being discovered.

Fred. You blockhead, the noise was in the street.—

Victoria.— {Calling her.

Fern. Ay, ay.

Fred. Where are you, my dear ?

Fern. I am here, my dear.

Jaq. Are you sure you are there, madam ? For my heart misgives me most plausibly about this father of yours.

Fern. Does it so, rogue enough ? [Aside.

Jaq. You had best make haste : old Argus will have an eye upon you, and then—

Fred. You'll slip your opportunity.

Fern. I'll lay a hold on't—and your ears, when I come within reach of 'em. [Aside.

Fred. Are you coming ?

Fern. Now, speak softly. [Fernando goes down the ladder.

Fred. Look you to the ladder : I'll call the chair to carry her off. [Exit.

Jaq. I'll lead you to my master, madam : pray give me you hand.

Fern. There 'tis for you — [Strikes him.

Jaq. By my troth, and so 'tis ; but not quite so soft as might be expected from a lady : sure you, or I, are mistaken, madam. [Looks upon him with his lanthorn. Mercy upon me ! what do I see ?

Fern. Why, what do you see ? you see the party you expected to see ; don't you, firrah ?

Jaq. The devil, the devil the devil.

[Crying out, and running about.

Fern. You lye, you lye like a rogue ; I am none of the devil, but I will make a devil of you before I have done

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L

with

218 *The, F A T A L · M A R R I A G E ; or,*
with you : I'll disappoint you of a halter, and send you a
wearer way than you thought of. Have at you.

[*Prefenting a Blunderbus at him, Jaqueline falls,*
Frederick runs and disarms Fernando.

Fred. Deliver us from a blunderbus.

Jaq. O lord, sir, a thousand thanks to you : I am not
perfectly satisfied whether he has kill'd me or no ; but if
I am dead, I shall be glad to hear the old rogue was
hang'd for me.

Fred. Who are you that wou'd murder my servant ?

Fern. One that wou'd do as much for his master.

Jaq. Oh ! he's the devil of a fellow ; take care of
him.

Fred. *Fernando !* how came you here ?

Fern. Why, your mistress, and my damn'd daughter,
not being quite ready to run away with you, desir'd me
to make her excuse, and come down in her room to re-
ceive you.

Jaq. My reception was a little extraordinary : pox
take you.

Fern. I beg your pardon, gentlemen, I am a little un-
provided at present to entertain you ; but my servants are
up in the house, I'll get them together as fast as I can,
and then you shall be sure of a welcome.

Fred. Unlucky disappointment !

Fern. No, no, no disappointment in the world : stay
but a little, I'll bring my daughter myself to you ; you
shan't be disappointed. [Victoria in man's cloaths opens
the door, comes forward and meets Fernando] How's this !
my door open ! and a man come out of my house ! who
are you ? what wou'd you have ? Thieves ! thieves ! lay
hold upon him : I charge you in the king's name to se-
cure him —— Thieves, thieves —— [Calling out.]

Vict. As you are gentlemen protect me ; I am no
thief.

Fred. How do we know that, friend ? 'tis very suspi-
cious.—

Fern. Ay, ay, they are your accomplices — I shall be
with you —— Thieves, thieves. [Goes in.]

Vict.

Vic. If you don't find me worth your protection, when you know me, do what you please with me.

Jaq. That's fair enough, sir; we had best draw off in time, the house will rise upon us.

Fred. A pox on this unlucky adventure. Poor Victoria she must pay for all. [Exeunt.

Fernando returns.

Fern. Fire! fire! you'll be burnt in your beds; will nobody come to me? — Thieves, thieves!

[Several Servants run in.

Serv. Where, where?

Fern. How came my doors open? where's my wife? Bid my daughter come down. I have lost — I don't know what I have lost. They may be plotters against the government for ought I know; run every way to apprehend 'em. [Servants run about the stage.

Serv. This way, this way.

[Exeunt.

The SCENE changes.

Enter Frederick, Victoria, and Jacqueline.

Jaq. A little of the old rogue's broad gold would have purchas'd your pardon if you had robb'd him: I was in hopes of a snack of the plunder.

Vic. My design lay another way, I assure you.

Fred. But that we must not enquire into.

Vic. Why, faith, yes, if you please. I am so much oblig'd to you for my deliverance, I'll make nothing a secret to you.

Fred. Nay, sir, if it be a secret —

Jaq. 'Twere not worth telling, sir, if it were not a secret.

Vic. It is a secret, as indeed every thing ought to be, when there's a woman in the case.

Fred. Is there a woman in the case then?

Vic. A very pretty woman; but you are a man of honour.

Jaq. That he is upon my word, sir; my master is as good

good at a lady's secret as you can be, and will betray it to nobody—before he has discover'd it himself. [Aside.]

Vi&g. And therefore I will honestly own to you, that my business was with *Victoria, Fernando's daughter.*

Fred. With *Victoria!*

Jaq. This fool will discover himself to his rival.

[Aside.]

Fred. Does *Victoria* know of your business?

Vi&g. Know of my business! why, I make love to her. I have had an intrigue with her these three months; I am almost tir'd of her. I lye with her every night in her father's house, and the devil's in't if she is not acquainted with my business.

Jaq. It must be your fault, if she is not, that's certain.

Vi&g. Now you must know her father is jealous of every body for her, but me; there's one *Frederick* has a design upon her; she has given him some encouragement of late, for the sake of her liberty. I thank her, she has thought him fitter for the fortune of her husband than I should be; she designs to marry him, good man, for her convenience; and I am to continue upon all occasions of pleasure, as I tell you, sir, her ladyship's humble servant.

Fred. You will have a rare time on't with this fool of a husband.

Vi&g. I shall manage him, I warrant you; do you know him?

Fred. I have seen him.

Jaq. I have the honour to know him a little too.

[Pulling his master by the sleeve.]

Vi&g. And what do you think of him? Does he promise to be a cuckold by his countenance?

Fred. Why, faith; no, I thought not.

Jaq. But there's no faith in faces, you know, sir.

Fred. It seems so indeed by what this gentleman has told us; but sir, do you know your cuckold? this *Frederick*.

Vi&g. Ay, sir, I know him.

Fred. Hold up your lanthorn, *Jacqueline.*

[The lanthorn held up to *Frederick's* face.]

Vi&g. Bless me! who are you?

Fred. That very man, the *Frederick* you speak of, your cuckold that is to be.

Vi&g.

Vic^t. Say you so, sir, why then you are oblig'd to me for telling your fortune beforehand; you may avoid if it you please; I have given you warhing.

Fred. But I must reward you for your care of me.

Jaq. 'Tis a pretty impudent fellow, and I'm sorry for him. [Afte.

Fred. Look you, sir, if I believ'd any thing that you have said of *Vittoria*; I wou'd not think you worth a beat-ing upon her account: I wou'd leave you to your vanity, and her to the folly of throwing herself away upon such a rascal; but I know you lye; yet I'll use you better than you deserve—draw— [draws.

Vic^t. Not in the dark; besides you are two to one. I scorn to recant what I said; and to-morrow as soon as you please—

Fred. I shan't part with you so, you shall go home with me to-night, that I may be sure of you in the morning.

Vic^t. With all my heart; you know me well enough, and when you see my face—

Fred. Pray let us see it—

[Jaqueline holds the lantern to her face.

Vic^t. You will believe that I am more—a—woman of honour, than to refuse a gentleman any reasonable satisfaction [In a soft voice.

Fred. May I believe my eyes! *Vittoria*!

Vic^t. Now I won't part with you, sir; what say you? shall I go home with you to-night, that you may be sure of me in the morning?

Fred. I will be sure of thee to-night, child.

Vic^t. No, not to-night; nothing in the dark, as I told you before.

Fred. I am confounded at your escape; your manner of making it; your father's coming down upon us: your man's cloaths; and a—

Vic^t. Never wonder at a woman's invention: we have wit enough for our own affairs, I warrant you. In a design of pleasing ourselves, you find, one way or other we bring it about.

Fred. You have play'd the rogue with me, *Victoria*, but I shall be reveng'd of you.

Vict. Why, you won't offer to marry, sure, after the character you have had of me?

Fred. I have had fair warning indeed, but he must have more grace than I, who can take warning of any thing he has a mind to.

Vict. Marriage is a bold venture at the best.

Fred. But where we please ourselves we venture least.

A C T III. S C E N E I.

S C E N E Fernando's House.

Scd 1. Fernando meeting Fabian in a Friar's Habit.

Fern. H O W now, son, what news with you? bless you, bless you—tho' I am but in an indifferent humour of blessing at present.

Fab. Sir, I come out of my duty to see you.

Fern. Why, that's well: I am lusty, as to that matter still; but your sister, like a vagrant, a vagabond jade, is run away from me: let her alone, see who'll have the worst on't; thy estate will be the better for it by some thousands.

Fab. Alas! my estate, sir! I have done with the things of this world.

Fern. Nay, I don't persuade you; I wou'd not go about to alter your holy resolution—but a scurvy jade! if I had known of her disobedience a little sooner, I cou'd have the better afforded to have been kinder to thee—

Fab. You have been kinder than I deserv'd, in forgiving me.

Fern. For I am afraid I was not so kind as I shou'd have been to thee—ha?

Fab. O dear sir.

Fern. Indeed I am; there might be faults on my side;

If truth wou'd out, I believe I lov'd money a little too well, did I not? ha?

Fab. I did not deserve it, sir.

Fern. But I'll make thee amends. We old fellows seldom think of doing good for our children, 'till they are out of the way of receiving it. Well, and how dost thou like a religious life? ha?

Fab. Very well, sir.

Fern. Why, very well, 'tis better than rambling up and down the town, spending thy time and money with the prophanes. When I die, I shall leave a swinging legacy to the monastery upon thy account.

Fab. Upon your own, sir, we shall pray for you.

Fern. No, no, I'll not put you to the trouble.

Fab. And help you out of purgatory.

Fern. Ah! my purgatory is in this world; and a young wife my tormenter. Good son call her to me. [Ex. *Fab.* Let me see, I have lost my daughter, but then I have sav'd my money; all daughters are lost to their parents, one time or other; why then the cheapest way of getting rid of 'em, is always the best for the family. If *Frederick* has got her, and will play the honorable fool to marry her for love, that is, without a penny of portion; he is in the way of repenting his bargain, and not I, I take it; but then I shou'd have marry'd her to my old friend *Francisco*—why, my old friend *Francisco* is luckily rid of a damn'd young wife, that wou'd as certainly have made him a —

Enter *Julia* and *Fabian*.

Jul. A what, husband? as who? you are always bringing your filthy comparisons into the family: you put this business so often into my head, it may fall upon your own, one day.

Fern. Fie, fie, wife, I did not mean thee; that undutiful daughter of mine I was reflecting upon; bless us! I warrant you, what a penitent she will be in a little time! we shall have her come, with her looks down, and her belly up, full of the experiment, with a pitiful petition for pardon, and portion.

Jul. Not if she be wise: what woman that has but the least sense of what it is to be happy, woold not prefer want, hunger, any thing to such an intolerable slavery?

Fern. Why then you are of her opinion, it seems?

Jul. Have a care of making me so.

Fern. I shall have a care of other peoples making you so.

Jul. Jealousy and ill usage may do much.

Fern. A good opportunity may do more.

Jul. One with the other, husband.

Fern. Wou'd make you run away from your husband? ha?

Jul. Ay, and run to another man too; any thing if my virtue would permit me.

Fern. Your virtue! ah! when I stand to the mercy of your virtue, I'll be contented to fall by that folly: no, no, I have a trick worth two on't: I'll keep you out of the temptation, and then 'tis not much matter whether you have any virtue, or no.

Jul. Pray do, lock me up, that your neighbours may know you dare not trust me at your kinsman's wedding.

Fab. Sir, you and my mother are invited: Villfrey is your relation, and will take it ill if you don't go.

Fern. Yes, yes, wife, we will go —

Fab. Or I shall be disappointed. [Aside.]

Fern. Hanging days are commonly holy-days; I love to see the execution of a husband: they have had their jest long enough upon me, I shall be glad to laugh in my turn. Besides, 'tis a public wedding, is it not?

Jul. Why, what's that to the purpose?

Fab. 'Tis kept publicly.

Fern. Why, so much the better; there's less danger of you, wife: these public entertainments seldom do any body hurt, but those that make 'em. All the young fellows I know will be designing upon the new marry'd woman; you must not take it ill, wife; every one in their turn, you have had yours already. When the husband invites, 'tis a sort of mannerly gratitude to be civil to his wife.

Fab. They say indeed, whoever dances with the bride, the husband pays the fidler.

Fern.

Fern. Ay, ay, let 'em all dance with her; if cuckolds would honestly declare themselves, their number would go near to keep 'em in countenance: I hope to see 'em so much in fashion, that no body may laugh at his neighbour.
[Exit]

S C E N E Isabella's House.

Carlos, with Frederick, and Victoria in man's cloaths.

Car. You are the strangest woman in the world, run away from your father, and then scruple to marry the man you ran to!

Vic. That will admit of a scruple, sir.

Fred. Don't you believe I love you?

Vic. O, yes, sir, your present inclination may be good, I believe: but that present inclination how long will it last, I beseech you?

Fred. There's a question for a lover indeed!

Vic. When that begins to tire, as every thing is the worse for the wearing, they say, how many husbandly reflections will you have upon the matter! you will find out a thousand pretty things you could have done with my portion; but not one civil thing with my person, without it: the woman, that plays the fool my way, in running from her friends, must have more than she can carry about her, to be welcome long in a place; and marriage is only for life, they say.

Fred. I gad, she's in the right on't.

Car. What can you say to this, *Frederick*? [Aside]

Vic. Nay, he can say more than I can believe, I assure you: but I won't put him to the expence of his conscience. When I see which way my brother's plot works upon my father, I shall be able to tell you more of my mind. In the mean time I have the privilege of my disguise, to be at the entertainment of this wedding.

Fred. But you'll get such a habit of wearing the breeches —

Vic. When you get me out of 'em, you must keep me out of 'em; that will be your way I believe; not, but if

The FATAL MARRIAGE; or,
you care for a security, you have a pretty good one upon
me.

Fred. As how pray?

Vi&B. Why, I have done too much with you, to do any
thing with any body else; I shan't be twice run away
with, I warrant you.

Fred. I dare rely upon you — [Exit Victoria.
Now, *Carlos*, every thing's to your mind.

Car. I have taken a great deal of pains to bring it
about. The severity of my sister's widowhood was
the only bar to my hopes in favour of her son.

Fred. This marriage has removed that.

Car. And ruin'd 'em for ever with my father.

Fred. How will you be able to thank 'em for the
service they have done you?

Car. The service pays itself: we are all pleas'd, I should
have visited 'em with an *Epitbalanium*, to bless their de-
votions; but I have a sonnet is pretty well to the pur-
pose. Strike up boys — 'Tis not much matter now,
whether by brother be alive, or no. [Afids.

Enter Victoria.

Vi&B. No news of the bride or bridegroom yet?

Car. We are going to summon 'em.

Vi&B. By this time, I suppose, they may be glad of a
handsome excuse to be rid of one another.

A S O N G, set by Mr. Purcell, and sung by Mrs.
Hodgson.

I.

THE danger is over, the battle is past;
The nymph had her fears, but she wentur'd at last;
She try'd the encounter, and when it was done,
She smil'd at her folly, and own'd she had won.
By her eyes we discover the bride has been pleas'd;
Her blushes become her, her passion is eas'd;
She dissembles her joy, and affects to look down;
If she sighs, 'tis for sorrow 'tis ended so soon.

Appear

II.

*Appear all you virgins, both aged and young,
All you, who have carry'd that burden too long,
Who have lost precious time, and you who are losing,
Betray'd by your fears between doubting and chusing;
Draw nearer, and learn what will settle your mind;
You'll find yourselves happy, when once you are kind.
Do but wisely resolve the sweet venture to run,
You'll feel the less little, and much to be won.*

Villeroy enters to them.

Vil. Who's there? my *Carlos!* *Frederick!* O my friends!—
Let me embrace you: welcome, welcome all.
What shall I say to you, that may express
My thanks for this good morrow? at a time—

Car. Fred. We came to wish you joy.—

Vil. I have it sure;
All that this life can give me; he must be
More than a man who can be happier.
I am so much transported with the thoughts
Of what I am, I know not what I do.
My *Isabella!* but possessing her,
Who would not lose himself? you'll pardon me;
Oh! there was nothing wanting to my soul,
But the kind wishes of my loving friends;
And now I have you to rejoice with me.
Where are my servants?
Gentlemen, this purse will tell you that I thank you:

[To the music.]
Where, where are you? [To his Servants.
Are my friends invited? is every thing in order?
You cannot be too busy in your care.
Pray put on your best looks, as well as cloaths.
Gold, that does every thing, shall make you smile;
Carry an invitation in your face,
To every one you see, no matter who.
I'll double all your wages; nothing appear-

L 6

Within

Within these walls, but plenty, mirth, and love ;
An universal face of joy, and love.

Fred. Why this is wonderful.

Vil. O when you all get wives, and such as mine,
(If such another woman can be found)

You will rave too, doat on the dear content,
And prattle in their praise, out of all bounds ;
No matter what the fools of form shall say,
Let 'em believe us mad ; we'll pity them,
And their dull want of knowing how to love.

Car. If you would talk calmly, and come to particulars, we might be the better for the story.

Vil. Particulars ! how ? which way shall I try
To utter my full bliss ? 'tis in my head,
'Tis in my heart, and takes up all my soul :
The labour of my fancy, and too vast
A birth of joy, to be disclos'd so soon.
Imagination must devour itself.

About some twelve months hence, I may begin
To speak plain sense ; and then I'll tell you all.

Vil. This matrimony would be a heav'nly thing, if
the first night would last always.

Vil. Sir, I must beg your pardon : pray forgive me
I did not see you sooner —

A pretty gentleman —

Car. A friend of ours.

Vil. Who is he ?

Vil. Sir, I am one, just upon the precipice of marrying ; and come here to try whether I like the conditions in my friends, before I venture on't myself.

Vil. O sir ; you can't do better :
I shall make converts of you all in time.

[*Servant gives him a letter.*]

Car. He does not know you.

Vil. I'm glad on't ; 'twould lay a restraint upon me, if he did, which I have no mind to at present.

Fred. He might take the privilege of a relation, perhaps, to censure your conduct.

Vil. That is to say, you would if you durst : but when I marry you, I'll give you leave.

Car.

Car. Does *Villeroy* know of *Fabian's* plot upon his father?

Fred. Yes; and approves of it, for the good of the family: that was the chief reason of inviting him.

Vil. Unlucky accident! my brother the archbishop of *Malines*, intending for *Buxelles*, is taken desperately ill; my letter prescribes me to be with him to-night. It must be so.

Fred. 'Tis hard indeed—

Car. To leave your bride so soon.

Vil. But having the possession of my love,
I am the better able to support
This absence, in the hopes of my return.

Car. Your stay will be but short?

Vil. It will seem long.
What say you to some cooling wines, or fruit,
Till the bride's dress'd?

Fred. We wait upon you.

Vil. Frederick, I hear you are a bridegroom too;
You're a bold man to marry my cousin *Vittoria*,
Without her father's leave:
But we'll take pains to make up all again. [Exit.]

Enter Sampson, and Nurse.

Sam. Ay, marry nurse, here's a master indeed! he'll double our wages for us! if he comes on as fast with my lady, as he does with her servants, we are all in the way to be well pleas'd.

Nurse. He's in a rare humour; if she be in as good a one—

Sam. If she be, marry, we may e'en fay, they have begot it upon one another.

Nurse. Well! why don't you go back again to your old count? you thought your throat cut, I warrant you, to be turn'd out of a nobleman's service.

Sam. For the future, I will never serve in a house, where the master or mistress of it lies single: they are out of humour with every body, when they are not pleas'd themselves. Now, this going to bed together, makes

makes every thing go well : there's mirth, and money stirring about, when those matters go as they should do.

Nurse. Indeed a good bed-fellow, *Samson* —

Sam. Ah nurse ! a good bed-fellow is a very good thing, and goes a great way — but, what now my lady is marry'd, I hope we shall have company come to the house : there's something always coming from one gentleman, or other, upon those occasions, if my lady loves company.

Nurse. Od' so, my master ! we must not be seen. { *Exit*

Enter Villeroy and Fabian.

Vil. You say 'tis innocent ?

Fab. Only a sleeping draught, to make him forget some of his ill humours : when it works, he'll be thought to have tipled too much; that's all : I'll remove him with as little trouble, as possible.

Vil. Is he coming ?

Fab. He's below ; I'll way-lay him with a bottle in a corner, and give him his dose before you see him.

Vil. That as you please. Pray tell the company The bride will wait upon 'em. { *Fabian goes out.*
Isabella.

Enter Isabella.

My *Isabella* ! O the joy of heart !
That I have leave at last to call you mine :
When I give up that title to the charms
Of any other wish, be nothing mine.
But let me look upon you ! view you well :
This is a welcome gallantry indeed ;
I durst not ask, but it was kind to grant.
Just at the time : dispensing with your dress
Upon our bridal-day.

I/a. Black might be ominous ;
I would not bring ill luck along with me.

Kil. O ! if your melancholy thoughts could change :
With shifting of your dress — time has done cures
Incredible, this way, and may, again.

'T.S.

'Tis something that the face of heav'n appears,
Darken'd, and hid so long in mourning veils :
When breaking clouds divide, they make a way,
For the bright sun to smile upon the day.

Isa. I cou'd have wish'd, if you had thought it fit,
Our marriage had not been so public.

Vil. Do not you grudge me my excess of love ;
That was a cause it could not be conceal'd :
Besides 'twould injure the opinion
I have of my good fortune, having you ;
And lessen it in other people's thoughts,
Busy on such occasions to enquire,
Had it been private.

Isa. I have no more to say.

Enter Carlos, Frederick, Victoria, other men and women.

Vil. Our friends too, who come into the support
Of our bad fortune, have an honest right,
In better times, to share the good with us.

Car. We come to claim that right, to share your joy.

Fred. To wish you joy ; and find it in ourselves ;
For a friend's happiness reflects a warmth,
A kindly comfort, into every heart
That is not envious.

Vil. He must be a friend,
Who is not envious of a happiness
So absolute as mine ; but if you are
(As I have reason to believe you are) :
Concern'd for my well-being, there's the cause :
Thank her for what I am, and what must be.

Vi&Z. Is not this better than lying alone, madam ?

Car. You'll take my advice another time, sister.

Fred. You ladies are hard to be persuaded to please
yourselves : but you know when you are well, I hope.

Car. When you are well pleas'd he means, sister. You
are a judge, and within the degrees of comparison, hav-
ing had a husband before. [Isa. turns away.]

Vil. *Carlos,* what have you done ? A rising smile
Stole from her thoughts, just redining on her cheeks,
And you have dash't it.

Car.

Car. I am sorry for't.

Vil. My best friends will forgive me, when I own
I must prefer her peace to all the world.
Pray let us bury every thing that's past;
Look forward to the kindly coming hour.
I have a prospect of sufficient joy;
Would you had all, to entertain your hopes,
And draw you on to everlasting love.

Enter Fernando, Julia and Fabian.

Fern. Why, so, so, all goes well I see: Wish you joy,
cousin. I am an old fellow, but I must salute your
bride. [Kisses ber.] A fine woman truly! I have had two
or three glasses to her health already: I design to be ver-
ry merry, ha.

Vil. Why, so you shall, cousin; fill some wine,

[To Servants.]

Fern. Why, that's well said; fill some wine. But one
word with you——

Jul. I did not know you at first.

Vil. If my father does not, I shall have the pleasure of
teasing him.

Jul. Your brother has taken care that he shall know
nobody.

Fern. If you had consulted me, I could have told you——

Vil. What, cousin?

Fern. Why, that there goes a great deal of pains to
keep a handsome wife to one's self; remember I told you
so.

Vil. Take care of your own, cousin.

Fern. Why, that's true too—[Sees Victoria with Julia.]
Where are you? how! what have you to do with this
gentlewoman, friend?

Vic. I would have something to do with her, if you
would let us alone.

Fern. 'Tis pity to disturb you indeed.

Vic. 'Gad so, sir, I beg your pardon——

[Bowing to Fernando.]

Eres. No harm done in the least, sir.

Vic. You look like a civil person——

Fern.

Fern. O, a very civil person.

Vic. You may have an interest in the lady, to speak a good word for me.

Fern. Why, so I may; I may speak a good word for you indeed. But for your comfort, I can tell you, she has the grace never to mind what I say to her.

Vic. Then do me the courtesy to leave us together, and I shall be able to speak for myself.

Fern. I never doubted it.

Vic. I suppose you may be her grandfather; 'tis your business, you know, to provide for your family.

Fern. And why her grandfather, pray?

Vic. Because you look to be about those years of discretion.

Fern. Come, you are an idle companion, to talk at this rate to my wife, and before my face too.

Vic. How, sir, your wife! is she your wife, sir?

Fern. I am her husband, sir.

Vic. I beg your pardon again, sir; I was in hopes—

Fern. I know you were; you were in hopes to make me a cuckold: But you are an impudent fellow for your hopes; and so get you gone about your business. Ha! what's the matter with me?

Jul. Why, husband, what's the matter?

Fern. I am so drowsy all on the sudden— [Yawns.]

Vil. The glass stays for you, Fernando.

Fern. I'll drink no more. Wife, let us go home.

Fred. One glass to the bride, sir.

Fern. O, are you there? You have a daughter of mine in keeping, I take it; wish you joy of her. [Yawns.]

Fred. Your wishes will go a great way to't, sir.

Fern. No farther; [Yawns] they will go no farther I tell you. Wife, wife, let us be going, wife. Sure I am enchanted— [Yawns.]

Vil. Come, come, Fernando, you will take your daughter into favour, I know.

Fern. Pray give me leave—

[Yawns.]

Cat. To depart in peace.

Fern. What I ought to do—[Yawns and falls into a chair.]

Vic. We shall know when he rises,

Vil.

Vil. I leave you to consider it ———

Fred. Upon his pillow.

Fern. Wife, wife, come along with me.

Fab. I'll take care of my father; take no notice, but come as soon as you can to me.

[*Fabian has Fernando carry'd off in a chair*

Car. Now, madam, I may take care of you. [To Julia.

Fred. What have we here?

Vil. Something is well meant:

Let us receive it so. Pray sit, my friends.

An Entertainment of dancing; after which a Song sent by an unknown Hand, set by Mr. Henry Purcell, and sung by Mrs. Ayliff.

I.

I figb'd and own'd my love;
Nor did the fair my passion disapprove;
A soft engaging air,
Not often apt to cause despair,
D.eclar'd she gave attention to my pray'r.
She seem'd to pity my distress,
And I expected nothing less,
Than what her every look does now confess.

II.

But, ah, her change destroys
The charming prospect of my promis'd joys;
She's rabb'd of every grace
That argu'd pity in her face,
And cold, forbidding frowns, supply their place
But while she strives to chill desire,
Her brighter eyes such warmth inspire,
She checks the flame, but cannot quench the fire.

Vil. You have not minded this poor pageantry.

Fia. I minded what you said; you are to leave me;

I'm sorry for the cause.

Kid. O could I think,

Could I persuade myself, that your concern

For

For me, or for my absence, had employ'd you—
 But you are all possess'd another way.
 I shall be jealous of this rival, grief,
 That you indulge; it sits so near your heart,
 There is not room enough for mighty love.

[*Servant whispering Vil.*

We come. You, *Carlos*,
 Will act a brother's part, till my return,
 And be the guardian here. All, all I have,
 That's dear to me, I give up to your care.
 Our dinner calls upon us: would I had
 An entertainment that could speak my joy,
 And thanks to this kind company. Lead on,
 Long suffering lovers would consent to stay,
 For the reward of such a night and day.

[*Exeunt, Carlos leading the bride.*

A C T IV. S C E N E I.

S C E N E, *The Monastery burying-place, Fernando's tomb; Jacqueline, with others, dress'd for procession.*

Enter Fabian, with Carlos, Julia, Frederick, and Victoria;

Fab. BE satisfied, and expect the consequence; if I don't answer your expectations, never rely upon me for a miracle again.

Jul. O! but this is carrying the jest too far; he has beaten him like a dog.

Victoria. Where have you buried him?

Fab. This is his tomb.

Car. Then here lies an honest fellow, who (if his wife would have heard reason) might have been a cuckold, and consequently gone to heav'n.

Jul. But now he's buried, 'tis too late, you know, to think of sending him that way.

Car.

Car. O virtue! virtue! what an enemy art thou to a woman's good inclinations!

Jul. A troublesome companion indeed, if one knew how to be honestly rid on't; can you advise me?

Car. Nay, take your own way; you are past advising, it seems; for a woman to play the hypocrite, and counterfeit virtue, when she has it not, is a very common thing.—

Jul. But to play the hypocrite, the wrong way!

Car. To pretend to be a woman of pleasure, and not have the benefit of the character—

Jul. Is what, it seems, you are not acquainted with. But for the future, sir, you may believe there are women, who won't be provok'd to injure their husbands.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, there's a letter for you at home: The messenger will deliver it nobody, but yourself.

Car. How? I must look about me then, I'll go with you. [Exit with the Servant.

Jaq. Sir, sir, I think I hear him stir in the tomb.

[A noise in the tomb.

Fab. We'll be within call, *Jaquelin*, begin as soon as you please. [Jaquelin with others singing in procession.

[Fernando pushes off the tomb-stone, and flares about.

Fern. Heigh ho! where am I now! who are you? what wou'd you have with me? ha!

Jaq. Bless us! what do I see! appropinquate in nomine—

Fern. O good sir! have a care of your hard words; you may raise the devil before you're aware of it; I have had too much of his company already.

Jaq. Avaunt, speak I conjure thee, if thou art the devil.

Fern. O! no, sir, I am none of the devil; though I have seen him very lately.

Jaq. What art thou?

Fern. Truly that's a very hard question at present; when I was in the land of the living, my name was Fernando, an old, jealous, covetous fellow; but what I am in this country, whether I am Fernando, or no—

Jaq.

Jaq. Fernando! save thee Fernando! what, coming out of thy grave!

Fern. From whence I am coming, or whither I am going, I can't tell you; but I have been in very bad company I remember; I have seen the devil.

Jaq. Our prayers are heard; we have been fasting, and praying thee out of purgatory, ever since thou wert buried.

Fern. Buried! have I been buried too?

Jaq. And now coming by thy grave in procession, what a miracle is wrought for thee, to bring thee to life again!

Fern. Nay, if I am alive again, 'tis a miracle, that's certain; but are you sure I am alive?

Jaq. Why, don't you find you are alive?

Fern. Alas! sir, I have been so often mistaken of late, I don't know what to say to't; I thought I was alive in purgatory; and stood in't a good while; but there's no contending with the devil in his own dominions you know; I was forc'd to confess myself, at last, as dead as a herring.

Jaq. O Fernando! be thankful for a good wife and son; they have shewn themselves so, in their sorrow for you, ever since you were bury'd.

Fern. Ay, ay, I heard of 'em; how have they done since I left 'em?

Jaq. They have made a hard shift; their sorrow is pretty well over now; but 'twas a great while before they were to be comforted; a great while indeed before they could be persuaded to forget you; but we must live by the living, you know.

Fern. That's very true.

Jaq. Your son Fabian, upon your death, was releas'd out of the monasterry; it had been a pity, you know, that a good estate should have wanted an heir.

Fern. Ay, so it had indeed.

Jaq. Yours was a very good one, I hear.

Fern. So, so; competent, and enough for me; as it is, I shall be glad to enjoy it a little longer I believe; I thank

thank you, sir, for bringing me to it again. But my wife, is my dear wife well? You know her too?

Jaq. She has had a great many good offers, since your death; and truly 'twas very much for a young widow to refuse 'em; but she resolves never to marry again.

Fern. Alack-a-day! I am beholden to her——

Jaq. They say you were jealous of her——

Fern. Indeed I am, very much beholden to her.

Jaq. That you were extremely jealous.

Fern. Aias! alas! I do confess it; I was an old fool; and she was too good for me: but if I ever see her again——

Jaq. Here they come, your virtuous wife, and son; pray learn to value 'em.

Enter Fabian, Julia, Frederick, and Victoria.

Fab. Is't possible!

Jul. What! risen from the dead!

Fab. May I believe my eyes?

Fern. Ay, ay, you may believe your eyes.

Jul. The very shroud my husband was bury'd in!

Fern. The very same, the very same; pray help me out on't, as soon as you can, for I look but oddly, I believe.

Fab. Well enough truly, sir, for a man that has been bury'd. You look well enough, but you smell a little of the place you come from, that I must own to you.

[*Fernando smells himself.*

Fern. Nay like enough, tho' I don't perceive it myself, but have I been bury'd long enough to stink then?

Fab. Fie, sir, stink! you don't positively stink; you have only an earthy favour, or so, with lying in the grave without eating; that's all I believe.

Fern. Nay, when I was alive, my breath was none of the best, especially from an empty stomach.

Fab. A day or two more had made it intolerable.

Fern. Ah, wife! I have suffer'd a great deal upon your account——

Jul. Alas! upon my account!

Fern. Upon the account of my jealousy; but I deserve'd

serv'd it : jealousy is a damnable sin there, I shall never be jealous more.

Jul. 'Tis well it has wrought that cure upon you.

Fern. Nay, you shall henceforward go when and where you please ; come when, and how you please ; say what, and to whom you please ; and in fine, if you have a mind to be reveng'd of me, you shall make me what you please : and that I'm sure will please you.

Jul. Leave that to me, husband.

Fern. *Fabian*, you look melancholy ; don't be sorry that I am alive again : you have some friends in the other world, that put me in mind of you : I'll settle half my estate upon you in present ; and when I die — who's that, *Frederick* ! you marry'd my daughter, I remember.

Vic. Indeed, sir, I had more grace than to dispose of myself without your consent ; and more respect for your family, than to marry any man without a portion.

Fred. If you please to give a blessing to our endeavours, we have agreed upon the point to make you a grandfather.

Fern. Why that's well said : you have my consent ; marry her, and I'll give her a portion ; but be sure you are as good as your word.

Fred. In what, sir ?

Fern. In making me a grandfather : I am so over joy'd that I am alive again, I care not how many children I have to provide for.

Vic. You see the fruits of jealousy.

Fred. I'll keep out of purgatory, I warrant you.

Fern. O don't name it, good son in-law : I shall never get it out of my mind ; that's certain. Come, my dear wife, and children, I owe my deliverance to your intercession and piety ; since you have brought me to life again, you shall have no cause, for the future, to wish me dead : some fifty years hence I may be contented to go to heav'n, without calling by the way.

In the mean time, husbands who doubt my story,

May find in jealousy their purgatory.

[Exitus.]

S C E N E,

SCENE, *the Street.*

Biron and Belford just arriv'd.

Bir. The longest day will have an end: we are got home at last.

Bel. We have got our legs at liberty; and liberty is home, where'er we go: tho' mine lies most in *England*.

Bir. Pray let me call this yours: for what I can command in *Bruxelles*, you shall find your own. I have a father here, who perhaps, after seven years absence, and costing him nothing in my travels, may be glad to see me. You know my story——— [Knock at the door. How does my beard become me?

Bel. Just as you would have it, 'tis natural, and not your own.

Bir. To-morrow you shall be sure to find me here, as early as you please. This is the house; you have observ'd the street.

Bel. I warrant you; I hasn't many visits to make, before I come to you.

Bir. To night I have some affairs, that will oblige me to be private.

Bel. A good bed is the privatest affair, that I desire to be engag'd in to-night; your directions will carry me to my lodgings. [Exit.

Biron knocks again, Sampson enters to him.

Sam. Who's there? what would you have?

Bir. Is your lady at home, friend?

Sam. Why, truly friend, it is my employment to answer impertinent questions: but for my lady's being at home, or no, that's just as my lady pleases.

Bir. But how shall I know, whether it pleases her or no?

Sam. Why, if you'll take my word for it, you may carry your errand back again: she never pleases to see any body at this time of night, that she does not know; and by the length of your beard, you may be grown out of her remembrance.

Bir.

Bir. But I have business; and you don't know how that may please her.

Sam. Nay, if you have business, she is the best judge whether your business will please her or no: therefore I will proceed in my office; and know of my lady, whether or no she is pleas'd to be at home, or no — [Going.]

Enter Nurse to them.

Nurse. Who's that you are so busy withal? methinks you might have found out an answer in fewer words: but, *Sampson*, you love to hear yourself prate sometimes, as well as your betters, that I must say for you. Let me come to him; who wou'd you speak with?

Bir. With you, mistress, if you can help me to speak to your lady.

Nurse. Yes, sir, I can help you, in a civil way: but can nobody do your business but my lady?

Bir. Not so well: but if you'll carry her this ring, she'll know my business better.

Nurse. There's no love-letter in it, I hope: you look like a civil gentleman; in an honest way I may bring you an answer. [Exit Nurse.]

Bir. My old nurse, only a little older! they say the tongue grows always; mercy on me! then her's is seven years longer, since I left her. Yet there's something in these servants folly pleases me: the cautious conduct of the family appears, and speaks in their impertinence. Well, mistress —

Nurse returns.

Nurse. I have deliver'd your ring, sir; pray heav'n you bring no bad news along with you.

Bir. Quite contrary, I hope.

Nurse. Nay, I hope so too; but my lady was very much surpris'd when I gave it her. Sir, I am but a servant as a body may say, but if you'll walk in, that I may shut the doors, for we keep very orderly hours, I can show you into the parlour, and help you to an answer, perhaps, as soon as those that are wiser. [Exeunt.]

*S C E N E, a Bed-chamber.**A woman-servant spreading a table.**Enter Isabella.*

I/a. I've heard of witches, magick spells, and charms,
 That have made nature start from her old course :
 The sun has been eclips'd, the moon drawn down
 From her career, still paler, and subdu'd
 To the abuses of this under world :
 Now I believe all possible. This ring,
 This little ring, with necromantic force,
 Has rais'd the ghost of pleasure to my fears ;
 Conjur'd the sense of honour, and of love,
 Into such shapes, they fright me from myself :
 I dare not think of them — [Servant goes out.
 I'll call you when I want you.

*Enter Nurse.**Nurse.* Madam, the gentleman's below.*I/a.* I had forgot, pray let me speak with him.*[Exit Nurse.]*

This ring was the first present of my love
To Biron, my first husband : I must blush
 To think I have a second : *Biron* dy'd
 (Still to my loss) at *Candy* ; there's my hope.
 O ! do I live to hope that he dy'd there !
 It must be so : he's dead ; and this ring left
 By his last breath, to some known, faithful friend,
 'To bring me back again. [*Biron* intredac'd, *Nurse* retires.
 That's all I have to trust to —
 My fears were woman's : I have view'd him all :
 And let me, let me say it to myself,
 I live again, and rise but from his tomb.

Bir. Have you forgot me quite ?*I/a.* Forgot you !

Bir. Then farewell my disguise, and my misfortunes.
 My *Isabella* ?

[He goes to her, she shrieks, and falls into a swoon
I/a.

Isa. Ha!

Bir. O ! come again :

Thy *Biron* summons thee to life and love ;
Once I had charms to wake thee.
Thy once lov'd, ever loving husband calls :
Thy *Biron* speaks to thee.

Isa. My husband ! *Biron* !

Bir. Excess of love, and joy, for my return,
Has over-power'd her — I was to blame
To take thy sex's softness unprepar'd :
But sinking thus, thus dying in my arms,
This extasy has made my welcome more
Than words could say : words may be counterfeit,
False coin'd, and current only from the tongue,
Without the mind ; but passion's in the soul,
And always speaks the heart.

Isa. Where have I been ? Why do you keep him from me ?
I know his voice : my life upon the wing,
Hears the soft lure that brings me back again.
'Tis he himself, my *Biron*, the dear man !
My true lov'd husband ! do I hold you fast,
Never to part again ? can I believe it ?
Nothing but you could work so great a change.
There's more than life itself in dying here :
If I must fall, 'tis welcome in these arms.

Bir. Live ever in these arms.

Isa. But pardon me,
Excuse the wild disorder of my soul :
The strange, surprising joy of seeing you,
Of seeing you again ; distracted me —

Bir. Thou everlasting goodness !

Isa. Answer me :
What hand of providence has brought you back
To your own home again ? O satisfy
Th' impatience of my heart ; I long to know
The story of your sufferings. You wou'd think
Your pleasures sufferings, so long remov'd
From *Isabella*'s love : but tell me all,
For every thought confounds me.

Bir. My best life ; at leisure, all.

Ifa. We thought you dead ; kill'd at the siege of *Candy*.

Bir. There I fell among the dead :

But hopes of life reviving from my wounds,

I was preserv'd, but to be made a slave.

I often writ to my hard father, but never had

An answer. I writ to thee too——

Ifa. What a world of woe

Had been prevented, but in hearing from you !

Bir. Alas thou could'st not help me.

Ifa. You do not know how much I cou'd ha' done ;

At least, I'm sure I cou'd have suffer'd all :

I wou'd have sold myself to slavery,

Without redemption ; giv'n up my child,

The dearest part of me, to basest wants——

Bir. My little boy !

Ifa. My life, but to have heard

You were alive——which now too late I find. [Aside.]

Bir. No more, my love ! complaining of the past,

We lose the present joy : 'tis over-price

Of all my pains, that thus we meet again,

I have a thousand things to say to thee——

Ifa. Wou'd I were past the hearing. [Aside.]

Bir. How does my child, my boy ? my father too,

I hear, he is living still.

Ifa. Well both, both well :

And may he prove a father to your hopes ;

Tho' we have found him none.

Bir. Come, no more tears.

Ifa. Seven long years of sorrow for your loss,

Have mourn'd with me——

Bir. And all my days behnd

Shall be employ'd in a kind recompence

For thy afflictions——Can't I see my boy ?

Ifa. He's gone to bed : I'll have him brought to you.

Bir. To-morrow I shall see him ; I want rest

Myself, after my weary pilgrimage.

Ifa. Alas ! what shall I get for you ?

Bir. Nothing but rest, my love ! to-night I would not

Be known, if possible, to your family ;

I see my nurse is with you ; her welcome

Would

Would be tedious at this time;

To-morrow will do better.

I/a. I'll dispose of her, and order every thing
As you would have it. [Exit.

Bir. Grant me but life, good Heav'n, and give the
means

To make this wond'rous goodness some amends;
And let me then forget her, if I can!

O! she deserves of me much more than I
Can lose for her, tho' I again could venture
A father, and his fortune, for her love.

You wretched fathers! blind as fortune all!

Not to perceive that such a woman's worth
Weighs down the portions you provide your sons.

What has she, in my absence, undergone?

I must not think of that; it drives me back
Upon myself, the fated cause of all.

Isabella returns.

I/a. I have obey'd your pleasure;
Every thing is ready for you.

Bir. I can want nothing here; possessing thee,
All my desires have carry'd to their aim
Of happiness; there's no room for a wife,
But to continue still this blessing to me.

I know the way, my love, I shall sleep sound.

I/a. Shall I help to undress you?

Bir. By no means;
I've been so long a slave to others pride,
To learn, at least, to wait upon myself;
You'll make haste after——

I/a. I'll but say my prayers, and follow you—— [Goes in.]

My prayers! no, I must ne'er pray again.

Prayers have their blessings to reward our hopes:
But I have nothing left to hope for more.

What Heav'n cou'd give, I have enjoy'd; but now
The baleful planet rises on my fate,
And what's to come, is a long line of woe;
Yet I may shorten it——

I promis'd him to follow——him!.

Is he without a name? *Biron*, my husband!
 To follow him to bed—my husband! ha!
 What then is *Villery*? but yesterday
 That very bed receiv'd him for its lord;
 Yet a warm witness of my broken vows,
 To send another to usurp his room.
O Biron! hadst thou come but one day sooner,
 I wou'd have follow'd thee through beggary,
 Through all the chances of this weary life,
 Wander'd the many ways of wretchedness
 With thee, to find a hospitable grave;
 For that's the only bed that's left me now. [Weeping.]
 —What's to be done—for something must be done.
 Two husbands! yet not one! by both enjoy'd,
 And yet a wife to neither! hold my brain—
 This is to live in common! very beasts,
 That welcome all they meet, make just such wives.
 My reputation! O, 'twas all was left me;
 The virtuous pride of an uncensur'd life;
 Which the dividing tongues of *Biron's* wrongs,
 And *Villroy's* resentments tear asunder,
 To gorge the throats of the blaspheming rabble.
 This is the best of what can come to-morrow.
 Besides old *Baldwin's* triumph in my ruin.
 I cannot bear it—
 Therefore to-morrow. Ha! a lucky thought
 Works the right way to rid me of 'em all,
 All the reproaches, infamies, and scorns,
 That every tongue and finger will find for me.
 Let the just horror of my apprehensions
 But keep me warm——no matter what can come.
 'Tis but a blow——if it should miss my heart
 ——But every part is mortal to such wounds.
 Yet I will see him first—
 Have a last look to heighten my despair,
 And then to rest for ever— [Going.]

Biron meets her.

Bir. Despair! and rest for ever! *Isabella!*
 These words are far from thy condition;

And

And be they ever so. I heard thy voice,
And cou'd not bear thy absence: come, my love!
You have staid long; there's nothing, nothing sure
Now to despair of in succeeding fate.

Ija. I am contented to be miserable,
But not this way; I've been too long abus'd,
And can believe no more;
Let me sleep on, to be deceiv'd no more.

Bir. Look up, my love, I never did deceive thee,
Nor ever can; believe thyself, thy eyes
That first enflam'd, and lit me to thy love,
Those stars, that still must guide me to my joys.

Ija. And me to my undoing. I look round
And find no path, but leading to the grave.

Bir. I cannot understand thee.

Ija. My good friends above,
I thank 'em, have at last found out a way,
To make my fortune perfect; having you,
I need no more; my fate is finish'd here.

Bir. Both our ill fates, I hope.

Ija. Hope is a lying, fawning flatterer,
That shews the fair side only of our fortunes,
To cheat us easier into our fall;
A trusted friend, who only can betray you;
Never believe him more. If marriages
Are made in heav'n, they should be happier.
Why was I made this wretch?

Bir. Has marriage made thee wretched?

Ija. Miserable, beyond the reach of comfort.

Bir. Do I live to hear thee say so?

Ija. Why! what did I say?

Bir. That I have made thee miserable.

Ija. No: you are my only earthly happiness,
And my false tongue bely'd my honest heart,
If it said otherwise.

Bir. And yet you said,
Your marriage made you miserable.

Ija. I know not what I said:
I've said too much, unless I could speak all.

Bir. Thy words are wild; my eyes, my ears, my heart
Were all so full of thee, so much employ'd
In wonder of thy charms, I could not find it:
Now I perceive it plain—

I/a. You'll tell nobody—

[*Distractedly.*

Bir. Thou art not well.

I/a. Indeed I am not; I knew that before,
But where's the remedy?

Bir. Rest will relieve my cares: come, come, no more,
I'll banish sorrow from thee.

I/a. Banish first the cause.

Bir. Heav'n knows how willingly.

I/a. You are the only cause.

Bir. Am I the cause? the cause of thy misfortunes?

I/a. The fatal innocent cause all my woes.

Bir. Is this my welcome home? this the reward
Of all my miseries, long labours, pains,
And pining wants of wretched slavery,
Which I've out-liv'd, only in hopes of thee?
Am I thus paid at last for deathless love?
And call'd the cause of thy misfortunes now?

I/a. Enquire no more; 'twill be explain'd too soon.

Bir. What! canst thou leave me too? [*She is going.*
I/a. Pray let me go: [*No says her.*

For both our sakes permit me—

Bir. Rack me not with imaginations
Of things impossible—Thou can't not mean
What thou hast said—yet something she must mean
—'Twas madness all—Compose thyself, my love!
The fit is past; all may be well again.
Let us to bed.

I/a. To bed! you've rais'd the storm
Will sever us for ever. O my *Biron!*
While I have life, still I must call you mine;
I know I am, and always was unworthy
To be the happy partner of your love;
And now must never, never share it more,
But, oh! if ever I was dear to you,

Ae

As sometimes you have thought me ; on my knees,
(The last time I shall care to be believ'd)
I beg you, beg to think me innocent,
Clear of all crimes, that thus can banish me
From this world's comforts, in my losing you.

Bir. Where will this end ?

Ifa. The rugged hand of fate has got between
Our meeting hearts, and thrust 'em from their joys :
Since we must part —

Bir. Nothing shall ever part us.

Ifa. Parting's the least that is set down for me :
Heav'n has decreed, and we must suffer all.

Bir. I know thee innocent ; I know myself so :
Indeed we both have been unfortunate :
But sure misfortunes ne'er were faults in love.

Ifa. Oh ! there's a fatal story to be told ;
Be deaf to that, as heav'n has been to me !
And rot the tongue that shall reveal my shame.
When thou shalt hear how much thou hast been wrong'd,
How wilt thou curse thy fond believing heart,
Tear me from the warm bosom of thy love,
And throw me like a pois'rous weed away.
Can I bear that ? bear to be curs'd and torn,
And thrown out from thy family and name,
Like a disease, & can I bear this from thee ?
I never can ; no, all things have their end.
When I am dead, forgive and pity me.

Bir. Yet stay, if the sad news at last must come,
Thou art my fate, and best may speak my doom.

[Exit after her.]

A C T V. S C E N E I.

Enter Biron, Nurse following her.

Bir. I Know enough ; th' important question
Of life or death, fearful to be resolv'd,
Is clear'd to me : I see where it must end ;

M. 5

And

250 *The FATAL MARRIAGE;*

'And need enquire no more——pray let me have
Pen, ink, and paper, I must write a while;
And then I'll try to rest——to rest! for ever. [Exit *Nurse*.
Poor Isabella! now I know the cause,
The cause of thy distress, and cannot wonder
That it has turn'd thy brain. If I look back
Upon thy loss, it will distract me too.
O, any curse but this might be remov'd!
But 'twas the rancorous malignity
Of all ill stars combin'd, of heav'n, and fate,
To put it quite out of their mercies reach,
To speak peace to us: if they could repent,
They cannot help us now. Alas! I rave:
Why do I tax the stars, or heav'n, or fate?
They are all innocent of driving us
Into despair; they have not urg'd my doom,
My father, and my brother are my fates;
That drive me to my ruin. They knew well
I was alive; too well they knew how dear
My Isabella—O my wife no more!
How dear her love was to me——yet they stood,
With a malicious silent joy, stood by,
And saw her give up all my happiness,
The treasure of her beauty, to another.
Stood by, and saw her married to another.
O cruel father! and unnatural brother!
Shall I not tell you that you have undone me?
I have but to accuse you of my wrongs,
And then to fall forgotten——sleep, or death,
Sits heavy on me, and benumbs my pains:
Either is welcome; but the hand of death
Works always sure, and best can close my eyes.

[Exit *Biron*.]

Enter Nurse and Sampson.

Nurse. Here's strange things towards *Sampson*: what
will be the end of 'em, do you think?

Sam. Nay, marry *Nurse*, I can't see so far; but the
law, I believe, is on *Biron*, the first husband's side.

Nurse. Yes; no question, he has the law on his side.

Sam.

Sam. For I have heard, the law says, a woman must be a widow, all out seven years, before she can marry again, according to law.

Nurse. Ay, so it does ; and our lady has not been a widow altogether seven years.

Sam. Why then, Nurse, mark my words, and say I told you so : the man must have his mare again, and all will do well.

Nurse. But if our new master *Villeroy* comes back again—

Sam. Why, if he does, he is not the first man that has had his wife taken from him.

Nurse. For fear of the worst, will you go to the old count, desire him to come as soon as he can, there may be mischief, and he is able to prevent it.

Sam. Now you say something ; now I take you, Nurse, that will do well indeed : mischief should be prevented ; a little thing will make a quarrel, when there's a woman in the way. I'll about it instantly— [Exeunt.]

S C E N E drawn, shews Biron asleep on a couch.

Isabella comes in to him.

I/a. Asleep so soon ! O happy ! happy thou !
Who thus can't sleep : I never shall sleep more.
If then to sleep be to be happy, he
Who sleeps the longest, is the happiest ;
Death is the longest sleep. O ! have a care,
Mischief will thrive apace. Never wake more ; [To Bir.
If thou didst ever love thy *Isabella*,
To-morrow must be dooms-day to thy peace.

— The sight of him disarms ev'n death itself.
— The starting transport of new quick'ning life
Gives just such hopes ; and pleasure grows again
With looking on him.— Let me look my last—
But is a look enough for parting love !
Sure I may take a kiss— where am I going ?
Help, help me, *Villeroy* ! — mountains, and seas

Divide your love never to meet my shame.
 [Throws her self upon the floor ; after a short pause, she
 raises herself upon her elbow.

What will this battle of the brain do with me !
 This little ball, this ravag'd province, long
 Cannot maintain——The globe of earth wants room
 And food for such a war——I find I'm going——
 Famine, plagues, and flames,
 Wide waste and desolation, do your work
 Upon the world, and then devour yourselves.
 ——The scene shifts fast——[See *Rises.*] and now 'tis bet-
 ter with me.

Conflicting passions have at last unbind'd
 The great machine ; the soul itself seem'd chang'd,
 O, 'tis a happy revolution here !
 The reas'ning faculties are all depos'd,
 Judgment, and understanding, common sense,
 Driv'n out, as traitors to the public peace.
 Now I'm reveng'd upon my memory,
 Her seat dug up, where all the images
 Of a long mispent life, were rising still,
 To glare a sad reflection of my crimes,
 And stab a conscience through 'em : you are safe,
 You monitors of mischief ! what a change !
 Better and better still ! this is the infant state
 Of innocence, before the birth of care.
 My thoughts are smooth as the Elysian plains
 Without a rub : the drowsy falling streams
 Invite me to their numbers.

Would I were landed there—— {Sinks into a chair.
 What noise was that ! a knocking at the gate !
 It may be Villery——no matter who.

Bir. Come, Isabella, come—— [Biron in a dream.
 Is. Hark, I am call'd.

Bir. You stay too long from me.

Is. A man's voice ! in my bed ! how came he there ?
 {Rises.

Nothing but villainy in this bad world ;
 Coveting neighbours goods, or neighbours wives ;
 Cuckoldes or cuckold-makers every where ;

Here's phyfick for your fever;

[Draws a dagger, and goes backward to the comb.
Breathing a vein is the only remedy.

Why, at this rate, 'tis impossible for an
Honest man to keep his wife to himself;

The trade must thrive they say
If husband's go to heav'n,

Where do they go, that send 'em? —— This to try.

[Just going to stab him, he rises, she knows him.
What do I see! [Strikes,

Bir. My Isabella! arm'd!

Isa. Against my husband's life!

Who, but the wretch, most reprobate to grace,

Despair ever hardened for damnation,

Could think of such a deed! murder my husband!

Bir. Thou didst not think it.

Isa. Madness has brought me to the gates of hell,
And there has left me. O the frightful change

Of my distractions! or is this interval

Of reason, but to aggravate my woes?

To drive the horror back with greater force

Upon my soul, and fix me mad for ever?

Bir. Why dost thou fly me so?

Isa. I cannot bear his sight; distraction, come,

Possess me all, and take me to thyself;

Shake off my chains, and harken to my aid;

Thou art my only cure —— like other friends,

He will not come to my necessities;

Then I must go to find the tyrant out;

Which is the nearest way? —— [Running out.

Bir. Poor Isabella, she's not in a condition

To give me any comfort, if she could;

Lost to herself; as quickly I shall be

To all the world. Death had been most welcome,

From any hand but hers; she never could

Deserve to be the executioner,

To take my life; nor I to fall by her.

Enter Nurse.

Nurse. Sir, there's somebody at the door, must needs
speak with you; he won't tell his name.

Bir.

Bir. I come to him—[*Exit Nurse.*]'Tis *Belford*, I suppose; he little knows
Of what has happen'd here; I wanted him,
And must employ his friendship—[*Exit.*]

S C E N E changes to the street.

Carlos enters with three ruffians.

Car. A younger brother! I was one too long,
Not to prevent my being so again—
We must be sudden—Younger brothers are
But lawful bastards of another name,
Thrust out of their nobility of birth
And family, and tainted into trades.
Shall I be one of 'em? bow, and retire,
To make more room for the unwieldy heir
To play the fool in? No.
But how shall I prevent it! *Biron* comes
To take possession of my father's love;
Would that were all; there is a birth-right too
That he will seize—besides, if *Biron* lives
He will unfold some practices, which I
Cannot well answer—therefore he shall die;
This night must be dispos'd of; I have means
That will not fail my purpose—Here he comes.

Bir. Ha! am I beset? I live but to revenge me.

[They surround him fighting; *Villeroy* enters with two
servants, they rescue him; Carlos and his party run.
Biron very much wounded, one of *Villeroy's* ser-
vants struggling on the ground with one of the Ruf-
fians.]

Vil. How are you, sir? mortally hurt, I fear.
Take care and lead him in. [*Biron* led in by a servant.]

Serv. Here's one of 'em. [*Villeroy* and servant secure
him.]

Vil. O 'tis very well; I'll make you an example.

[They lead him in.]

S C E N E

S C E N E changes to the inside of the house.

Enter Isabella.

Isa. Murder my husband ! O ! I must not dare
To think of living on ; my desperate hand,
In a mad rage, may offer it again ;
Stab any where, but there. Here's room enough
In my own breast, to act the fury in,
The proper scene of mischief. *Villeroy* comes ;
Villeroy and *Biron* come : O ! hide me from 'em —
They rack, they tear ; let 'em carve out my limbs,
Divide my body to their equal claims :
My soul is only *Biron*'s ; that is free,
And thus I strike for him, and liberty.

[Going to stab herself, *Villeroy* runs in, and prevents
her, by taking the dagger from her.

Vil. Angels defend and save thee !
Attempt thy precious life ! the treasury
Of nature's sweets ! life of my little world !
Lay violent hands upon thy innocent self !

Isa. Swear I am innocent, and I'll believe you.
What would you have with me ? pray let me go.
— Are you there, sir ? you are the very man
Have done all this — You would have made
Me believe, you married me ; but the fool
Was wiser I thank you ; 'tis not all gospel
You men preach upon that subject.

Vil. Doit thou not know me ?

Isa. O, yes, very well. [Staring on him.
You are the widow's comforter, that marries
Any woman, when her husband's out of the way.
But I'll never, never take your word again.

Vil. I am thy loving husband.

Isa. I have none ; no husband — [Weeping.
Never had but one, and he dy'd at *Candy*,
Did he not ? I'm sure you told me so ; you,
Or somebody, with just such a lying look,
As you have now ; speak, did he not die there ?

Vil.

Vil. He did, my life!

Ifa. But swear it, quickly swear,

Biron enters bloody, and leaning upon his sword.

Before that screaming evidence appears,

In bloody proof against me——

[*Sbs seeing Biron swoon into a chair, Vil. helps her.*

Vil. Help there, Nurse, where are you?

Ha ! I am distract'd too ! [*Going to call for help sees Biron.*

Biron alive !

Bir. The only wretch on earth that must not live.

Vil. Biron, or Villary must not, that's decreed.

Bir. You've sav'd me from the hands of murderers :

Would you had not, for life's my greatest plague ?

And then of all the world, you are the man

I would not be oblig'd to——*Isabella!*

I came to fall before thee : I had dy'd

Happy, not to have found your Villary here.

A long farewell, and a last parting kiss. [*Kisses her.*

Vil. A kiss, confusion ! it must be your last. [*Drews.*

Bir. I know it must——here I give up that death

You but delay'd. Since what is past has been

The work of fate, thus we must finish it.

Thrust home, be sure——

[*Falls down.*

Vil. Alas ! he faints ! some help there.

Bir. This letter is my last, last dying care :

Give it my father——

[*Diss.*

Vil. He's gone : let what will be the consequence.

I'll give it him. I have involv'd myself,

And would be clear'd ; that must be thought on now.

My care of her is lost in wild amaze. [*Going to Isa.*

Are you all dead within there ? Where, where are you ?

[*Exit.*

Isabella comes to herself.

Isa. Where have I been ! methinks I stand upon

The brink of life, ready to shoot the gulph

That lies between me and the realms of rest :

But still detain'd, I cannot pass the streight.

Deny'd to live, and yet I must not die.

Doom'd to come back, like a complaining ghost.

To

To my unbury'd body—Here it lies,

[Draws herself by Biron's body.

My body, soul, and life. A little dust

To cover our cold limbs in the dark grave,

There, there we shall sleep safe and sound together.

Enter Villeroy with servants.

Vil. Poor wretch ! upon the ground ! she's not her-self,

Remove her from the body. [Servants going to raise her.

Ifa. Never, never :

You have divorc'd us once, but shall no more.

Help, help me, Biron ; ha ! bloody and dead !

O murder, murder ! you have done this deed !

Vengeance ! and murder ! bury us together ;

Do any thing but part us.

Vil. Gently, gently raise her—

She must be forc'd away.

[She drags the body after her, they get her into their arms, and carry her off.

Ifa. O, they tear me ! cut off my hands,

Let me leave something with him,

They'll clasp him fast—

O cruel, cruel men !

This you must answer one day.

Vil. Good nurse, take care of her : [Nurse follows her.

Send for all helps : all, all that I am worth,

Shall cheaply buy her peace of mind again.

Be sure you do

[To a Servant.

Just as I order'd you. The storm grows loud,

I am prepar'd for it ; now let them in. [Knocking at the door.

Enter Count Baldwin, Carlos, Bellford, Frederick, with
Servants.

C. Bald. O do I live to this unhappy day !

Where is my wretched son ?

Car. Where is my brother ?

[They set, and gather about the body.

Vil. I hope in heav'n.

Car.

258 *The FATAL MARRIAGE; or,*

Car. Can't thou pity him,
Wish him in heav'n? When thou hast done a deed,
That must forever cut thee from the hopes
Of ever coming there?

Vil. I do not blame you,
You have a brother's right to be concern'd
For his untimely death——

Car. Untimely death indeed!
Vil. But yet you must not say, I was the cause.
Car. Not you the cause! why, who should murder
him?

We do not ask you to accuse yourself:
But I must say that you have murder'd him:
And will say nothing else, 'till justice draws
Upon our side, at the loud call of blood,
To execute so foul a murderer.

Bell. Poor *Biron*? Is this thy welcome home?
Fred. Rise, sir, there is a comfort in revenge,
Which yet is left you. [To C. Baldwin.

Car. Take the body hence. [Biron carried off.
C. Bald. What could provoke you?
Vil. Nothing could provoke me
To a base murder; which, I find, you think
Me guilty of: I know my innocence:
My servants too can witness that I drew
My sword in his defence, to rescue him:

Bell. Let the servants be call'd.
Fred. Let's hear what they can say.
Car. What they can say! why, what should servants
say?

They're his accomplices, his instruments,
And will not charge themselves. If they could do
A murder for his service; they can lie,
Lie nimbly; and swear hard to bring him off.
You say, you drew your sword in his defence?
Who were his enemies? Did he need defence?
Had he wrong'd any one? Could he have cause
To apprehend a danger but from you?
And yet you rescu'd him! no, no, he came
Unseasonably, (that was all his crime)

Unluckily

Unluckily to interrupt your sport :
You were new marry'd, marry'd to his wife ;
And therefore you, and she, and all of you,
(For all of you I must believe concern'd)
Combin'd to murder him out of the way.

Bell. If it be so.

Car. It can be only so.

Fred. Indeed it has a face.

Car. As black as hell.

C. Bald. The law will do me justice : send for the magistrate.

Car. I'll go myself for him — {Exit.

Vil. These strong presumptions, I must own indeed,
Are violent against me ; but I have
A witness, and on this side heav'n too.

Fred. What cries are those ?

Vil. Open that door :

S C E N E opened, shows Pedro on a rack.
Here's one can tell you all.

Ped. All, all : take me but from the rack, I'll confess
all. I can hold out no longer.

Vil. You and your accomplices design'd
To murder Biron ? speak.

Ped. We did.

Vil. Did you engage upon your private wrongs,
Or were employ'd ?

Ped. He never did us wrong.

Vil. You were set on then.

Ped. O ! we were set on.

Vil. What do you know of me ?

Ped. Nothing, nothing :
You sav'd his life ; and have discover'd me.

Vil. Take him down.

C. Bald. Hold.

Vil. He has acquitted me.

If you wou'd be resolv'd of any thing,
He stands upon his answer.

C. Bald. Who set you on to act this horrid deed ?

Ped. Kill me outright ; let all the guilt remaine.

C. Bald.

C. Bald. I'll know the villain; give me quick his name,
Or I shall tear it from thy bleeding heart.
Pull hard, rack, torture him—

Ped. O! I confess.

C. Bald. Do then.

Ped. It was my master, *Carlos*, your own son.

C. Bald. O monstrous! monstrous! most unnatural!

Fred. Did he employ you to murder his own brother?

Ped. He did, and he was with us when 'twas done.

C. Bald. If this be true, which is impossible,
It is but just upon me: *Biron's* wrongs

Must be reveng'd; and I the cause of all.

Fred. What will you do with him?

C. Bald. Now take him down:

[*Pedro taken from the racks*

I know too much.

Vil. I had forgot; your wretched, dying son,
Gave me this letter for you. [*Gives it to Baldwin.*
I dare deliver it: if it speaks of me,
I pray to have it read.

C. Bald. You know the hand.

Bel. I know 'tis *Carlos's* hand.

C. Bald. Pray read it.

Belford reads the letter.

S I R,

I Find I am come only to lay my death at your door: I am now going out of the world, but cannot forgive you, nor my brother *Carlos*, for not hindering my poor wife *Isabella* from marrying with *Villeroy*, when you both knew, from so many letters, that I was alive.—

B I R O N.

Vil. How! did you know it then?

C. Bald. Amazement! all.

Enter Carlos with Officers.

O *Carlos*! are you come? your brother here,
Here in a wretched letter, lays his death

On

On you, and me : have you done any thing
To hasten his fatal end ?

Car. Bless me, sir, I do any thing ? who, I !

C. Bald. He talks of letters that were sent to us ;
I never heard of any : did you know
He was alive ?

Car. Alive ! heav'n knows, not I.

C. Bald. Had you no news of him, from a report,
Or letter never ?

Car. Never, never, I.

Bel. That's strange indeed : I know he often writ
To lay before you the condition [To Baldwin.
Of his hard slavery : and more I know,
That he had several answers of his letters :
He said they came from you ; you are his brother.

Car. Never from me.

Bel. That will appear.
The letters I believe are still about him ;
For some of 'em I saw but yesterday.

C. Bald. What did those answers say ?

Bel. I cannot speak to the particulars ;
But I remember well the sum of 'em
Was much the same, and all agreed,
That there was nothing to be hop'd from you ;
That 'twas your barbarous resolution,
To let him perish there.

C. Bald. O Carlos ! Carlos ! hadst thou been a brother.

Car. This is a plot upon me ; I never knew
He was in slavery, or was alive,
Or heard of him, before this fatal hour.

Bel. There, sit, I must confront you :
He sent you a letter, to my knowledge, last night ;
And you sent him word you would come to him :
I fear you came too soon.

C. Bald. 'Tis all too plain.

Bring out that wretch before him. [Pedro produc'd.

Car. Ha ! Pedro there ! then I am caught indeed.

Bel. You start at sight of him,
He has confess the bloody deed.

Car. Well then, he has confess'd,
And I must answer it.

Bel. Is there no more?

Car. Why, what would you have more? I know the worst,
And I expect it.

C. Bald. Why haft thou done all this?

Car. Why, that which damns most men, has ruin'd me,
The making of my fortune. *Biron* stood
Between me, and your favour; while he liv'd,
I had not that; hardly was thought a son;
And not at all a-kin to your estate.
I could not bear a younger brother's lot,
To live depending, upon courtesy.
Had you provided for me like a father,
I had been still a brother.

C. Bald. 'Tis too true,

I never lov'd thee, as I shou'd have done;
It was my sin, and I am punish'd for't.
O! never may distinction rise again
In families: let parents be the same
To all their children; common in their care,
And in their love of 'em: I am unhappy
For loving one too well.

Vil. You knew your brother liv'd; why did you take
Such pains to marry me to *Isabella*?

Car. I had my reasons for't.

Fred. More then I thought you had.

Car. But one was this;
I knew my brother lov'd his wife so well,
That if he ever shou'd come home again,
He cou'd not long out-live the loss of her.

Bel. If you rely'd on that, why did you kill him?

Car. To make all sure. Now you are answer'd all.
Where must I go? I'm tir'd of your questions.

C. Bald. I leave the judge to tell thee what thou art:
A father cannot find a name for thee.
But parricide is highest treason sure
To sacred nature's laws; and must be so,
So sentenc'd in thy crimes. Take him away —

The

The violent remedy is found at last,
That drives thee out, thou poison of my blood,
Infected long, and only foul in thee. [Carlos led off.
Grant me, sweet heav'n, thy patience, to go through
The torment of my cure—here, here begins
The operation—alas! she's mad.

Enter Isabella distressed beld by her women, her hair disheav'd, her little son running in before, being afraid of her.

Vil. My Isabella! poor unhappy wretch!
What can I say to her?

Isa. Nothing, nothing, 'tis a babbling world,
I'll hear no more on't. When does the court sit?
I'll not be bought, what! to sell innocent blood!
You look like one of the pale judges here,
Minos, or Radamanth, or Hæacus,
I have heard of you.

I have a cause to try, an honest one;
Will you not hear it? then I must appeal
To the bright throne, call down the heav'ly powers,
To witness how you use me.

Wcm. Help, help, we cannot hold her.

Vil. You but enrage her more.

C. Bald. Pray give her way, she'll hurt no body.

Isa. What have you done with him? he was here but now;

I saw him here. Oh *Biron, Biron!* where,
Where have they hid thee from me? he is gone—
But here's a little flaming cherubin—

Child. O save me, save me! [Running to Baldwin.

Isa. The *Mercury* of heav'n, with silver wings,
Impt for the flight, to overtake his ghost,
And bring him back again.

Child. I fear she'll kill me.

C. Bald. She will not hurt thee. [She flings away.

Isa. Will nothing do! I did not hope to find
Justice on earth; 'tis not in heav'n neither.
Biron hath watch'd his opportunity.

Softly;

Softly ; he steals it from the sleeping gods,
And sends it thus. [Stabs herself.
Now, now I laugh at you, defy you all,
You tyrants, murderers.

Vil. Call, call for help : O heav'n ! this was too much.

C. Bald. O ! thou most injur'd innocence ! yet live,
Live but to witness for me to the world,
How much I do repent me of the wrongs,
Th' unnatural wrongs, which I have heap'd on thee,
And have pull'd down this judgment on us all.

Vil. O speak, speak but a word of comfort to me.

C. Bald. If the most tender father's care, and love
Of thee, and thy poor child can make amends ;
O yet look up, and live.

Ifa. Where is that little wretch ? [They raise her.
I die in peace to leave him to your care.
I have a wretched mother's legacy,
A dying kiss, pray let me give it him,
My blessing ; that, that's all I have to leave thee.
O may thy father's virtues live in thee :
And all his wrongs be buried in my grave.
The waves and winds will dash, and tempests roar ;
But wrecks are toss'd at last upon the shore. [Dies.

Vil. She's gone, and all my joys of life with her.
Where are your officers of justice now ?
Seize, bind me, drag me to the bloody bar.
Accuse, condemn me ; let the sentence reach
My hated life, no matter how it comes,
I'll think it just, and thank you as it falls.
Self-murder is deny'd me : else how soon
Could I be past the pain of my remembrance !
But I must live, grow gray with ling'ring grief,
To die at last in telling this sad tale.

C. Bald. Poor wretched orphan of most wretched parents !
'Scaping the storm, thou'rt thrown upon a rock,
To perish there ; the very rocks wou'd melt ;
Soften their nature sure to foster thee :
I find it by myself. My flinty heart,
That barren rock, on which thy father starv'd.

Opens

Opens its springs of nourishment to thee :
There's not a vein but shall run milk for thee.
O had I pardon'd my poor *Biron*'s fault !
His first, his only fault, this had not been.
To erring youth there's some compassion due ;
But while with rigour you their crimes pursue,
What's their misfortune, is a crime in you.
Hence learn, offending children to forgive :
Leave punishment to heav'n, 'tis heav'n's prerogative.

E P I L O G U E:

Spoken by Mrs. VERBRUGGEN.

*NOW tell me, when you saw the lady die,
Were you not puzzled for a reason why?
A buxom damsel, and of play-bonsecracy,
Not so out-live th' enjoyment of a brace!
Were that the on'y marriage-curse in store,
How mang would compound to suff'r more,
And yet live on, with comfort, to threescore?
But on our Exits there is no relying:
We women are so whimsical in dying.
Some pine away for loss of ogling fellows;
Nay some have dy'd for love, as stories tell us.
Sous, say our histories, though long ago,
For bearing undergone a rape, or so,
Plung'd the fell dagg'r, without more ado.
But time has laugh'd those follies out of fashion;
And sure they'll never gain the approbation
Of ladies who consult their reputation.
For if a rape must be esteem'd a curse,
Grim death, and publication make it worse:
Should the opinion of the world be try'd,
They'll scarce give judgment on the plaintiff's side;
For all must own, 'tis most egregious nonsense,
To die for being pleas'd, with a safe conscience.
Nay, look not on your fans, nor turn away,
For tell me, ladies, why do you marry, pray?
But so enjoy your wishes as you may.*

H O M E O D Y A N

OROONOKO.

A

T R A G E D Y.

As it was Acted at the
THEATRE ROYAL,
By Their MAJESTIES SERVANTS,
In the YEAR 1699.

— Quo fata trahunt, virtus secura sequetur,

LUCAN.

Virtus recludens immeritis mori

Cœlum, negata tentat iter via,

Hor. Od. II. lib iii.

N 2

To his G R A C E,

W I L L I A M,

DUKE of DEVONSHIRE, &c.

Lord Steward of his Majesty's Household, Knight of
the most Noble Order of the Garter, and one of his
Majesty's most Honourable Privy-Council.

MY LORD,

THE best part of the fortune of my last play
(*The Innocent Adultery*) was, that it gave me an
opportunity of making myself known to your grace.
You were pleased to countenance the advances which
I had been a great while directing and aiming at you,
and have since encouraged me into an industry,
which, I hope, will allow me in this play to own
(which is the only way I can) the great obligations I
have to you.

I stand engaged to Mrs. Behn for the occasion of a
most passionate distress in my last play ; and in a con-
science that I had not made her a sufficient acknow-
ledgment, I have run farther into her debt for
Oroonoko, with a design to oblige me to be honest ;
and that every one may find me out for ingratitude,
when I don't say all that's fit for me upon that subject.
She had a great command of the stage ; and I have
often wondered that she would bury her favourite
hero in a *novel*, when she might have revived him in
the *scene*. She thought either that no actor could re-

present him, or she could not bear him represented: and I believe at last, when I remember what I have heard from a friend of hers, that she always told his story more feelingly than she wrote it. Whatever has happened to him at Surinam, he has mended his condition in England. He was born here under your grace's influence; and that has carried his fortune farther into the world, than all the poetical stars that I could have solicited for his success. It was your opinion, my lord, that directed me to Mr. Verbruggen; and it was his care to maintain your opinion, that directed the town to me, the better part of it, the people of quality; whose favours, as I am proud of, I shall always be industrious to preserve.

My lord, I know the respect and reverence which in this address I ought to appear in before you, who are so intimate with the ancients, so general a knower of the several species of poetry, and so just a judge in the trials of this kind. You have an absolute power to arraign and convict, but a prevailing inclination to pardon and save; and from the humanity of your temper, and the true knowledge of the difficulties of succeeding this way, never aggravate or insist upon faults,

— *Quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura* —

HOR. ART. POET.

to our condemnation, where they are venial, and not against the principles of the art we pretend to. Horace, who found it so, says,

— *Gratia regum
Pieriis tentata modis.*

The favour of great men is the poet's inheritance, and all ages have allowed them to put in their claim; I only wish that I had merit enough to prefer me to your

(. 271 .)

your grace's that I might deserve in some measure
that patronage which you are pleased to bestow on
me : that I were a *Horace* for such a *Macenas*. That
I could describe what I admire; and tell the world
what I really think, that as you possess those infinite
advantages of nature and fortune in so eminent a de-
gree ; that as you so far excel in the perfections of
body and mind, you were designed and fashioned a
prince, to be the honour of the nation, and the grace
and ornament of the court. Sir, in the fullness of hap-
piness and blessings which you enjoy, I can only
bring in my wishes for the continuance of them ; they
shall constantly be devoted to you, with all the ser-
vices of,

My LORD,

Your Grace's most obliged,

most thankful, and

most humble servant,

T. SOUTHERN E.

N 4

P R O-

P R O L O G U E:

. Sent by an Unknown Hand.

And spoken by Mr. P O W E L L.

AS when in hostile times two neigbouring states
Strive by themselves, and their confederates ;
The war at first is made with awkward skill,
And soldiers clumsily each other kill ;
Till time at length their untaught fury tames,
And into rules their heedless rage reclains :
Then every science by degrees is made
Subservient to the man-destroying trade :
Wit, wisdom, reading, observation, art ;
A well-turn'd head to guide a generous heart.
So it may prove with our contending states,
If you will kindly but supply their wages :
Which you with ease may furnish, by retrenching
Your superfluities of wine and wenching.
Who'd grudge to spare from riot and bard drinking,
To lay it out on means to mend his thinking ?
To follow such advice you shou'd have leisure,
Since what refines your sense, refines your pleasure :
Women grown tame by use each fool can get,
But cuckolds all are made by men of wit.
To virgin favours fools have no pretence :
For maidenheads were made for men of sense.
'Tis not enough to have a kerje well bred ;
To shew his mettle, he must be rovell fed :
Nor is it all in provender and breed.
He must be try'd and strain'd, to mend his speed :

A favour'd

*A favour'd poet, like a pamper'd horse,
Will strain his eye-balls out to win the course.
Do you but in your wis'doms vote it fit
To yield due succours to this war of wit,
The buskin with more grace shall tread the stage,
Love sing in softer strains, heroes less rage :
Satire shall shew a triple row of teeth,
And comedy shall laugh your sops to death :
Wit shall refine, and Pegasus shall foam,
And soar in search of ancient Greece and Rome.
And since the nation's in the conquering fit,
As you by arms, we'll vanquish France in wit :
The work were over, cou'd our poets write
With half the spirit that our soldiers fight.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

M E N.

OROONOKO,	Mr. Verbruggen.
ABOAN,	Mr. Powell.
LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR of SU- RINAM,	Mr. Williams.
BLANDFORD,	
STANMORE,	Mr. Harland.
JACK STANMORE,	Mr. Horden.
Captain DREVER,	Mr. Mills.
DANIEL, son to Widow LACKEITT,	Mr. B. Johnson.
HOTTMAN,	Mr. M. Lee.
	Mr. Sympson.

W O M E N.

IMOINDA,	Mrs. Rogers.
WIDOW LACKEITT,	Mrs. Knight.
CHARLOTT WELLDON, in man's cloaths.	Mrs. Verbruggen.
LUCY WELLDON, her sister.	
	Mrs. Lucas.

Planters, Indians, Negroes, Men, Women, and Children.

The S C E N E, Surinam, a colony in the *West-Indies*;
at the time of the action of this tragedy, in the posses-
sion of the *English*.

O R O.

OROONOKO.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Weldon following Lucy.

Lucy.

WHAT will this come to? what can it end in? you have persuaded me to leave dear *England*, and dearer *London*, the place of the world most worth living in, to follow you a husband-hunting into *America*: I thought husbands grew in these plantations!

Wel. Why so they do, as thick as oranges, ripening one under another. Week after week they drop into some woman's mouth: 'tis but a little patience, spreading your apron in expectation, and one of 'em will fall into your lap at last.

Luc. Ay, so you say indeed!

Wel. But you have left dear *London*, you say: pray what have you left in *London* that was very dear to you, that had not left you before?

Luc. Speak for yourself, sister.

Wel. Nay, I'll keep you in countenance. The young fellows, you know, the dearest part of the town, and without whom *London* had been a wilderness to you and me, had forsaken us a great while.

N.6.

Luc.

Luc. Forsaken us ! I don't know that they ever had us.

Wel. Forsaken us the worst way, child ; that is, did not think us worth having ; they neglected us, no longer design'd upon us, they were tir'd of us. Women in *London* are like the rich silkks, they are out of fashion a great while before they wear out——

Luc. The devil take the fashion, I say.

Wel. You may tumble 'em over and over at their first coming up, and never disparage their price ; but they fall upon wearing immediately, lower and lower in their value, till they come to the broker at last.

Luc. Ay, ay, that's the merchant they deal with. The men would have us at their own scandalous rates ; their plenty makes 'em wanton, and in a little time, I suppose, they won't know what they would have of the women themselves.

Wel. O, yes, they know what they would have. They would have a woman give the town a pattern of her person and beauty, and not stay in it so long to have the whole piece worn out. They would have the good face only discover'd, and not the folly that commonly goes along with it. They say there is a vast stock of beauty in the nation, but a great part of it lies in unprofitable hands ; therefore, for the good of the public, they would have a draught made once a quarter, send the decaying beauties for breeders into the country, to make room for new faces to appear, to countenance the pleasures of the town.

Luc. 'Tis very hard, the men must be young as long as they live, and poor women be thought decaying and unfit for the town at one or two and twenty. I'm sure we were not seven years in *London*.

Wel. Not half the time taken notice of, sister. The two or three last years we could make nothing of it, even in a vizard-mask ; not in a vizard-mask, that has cheated many a man into an old acquaintance. Our faces began to be as familiar to the men of intrigue, as their duns, and as much avoided. We durst not appear in public places, and were almost grudg'd a gallery in the churches ; even there they had their jests upon us, and cry'd

cry'd, she's in the right on't, good gentlewoman, since no man considers her body, she does very well indeed to take care of her foul.

Luc. Such unmannerly fellows there will always be.

Wel. Then you may remember, we were reduc'd to the last necessity, the necessity of making silly visits to our civil acquaintance, to bring us into tolerable company. Nay, the young inns-of-court beaux, of but one term's standing in the fashion, who knew nobody, but as they were shewn 'em by the orange-women, had nick-names for us: how often have they laugh'd out, there goes my landlady; is not she come to let lodgings yet?

Luc. Young coxcombs that knew no better.

Wel. And that we must have come to. For your part, what trade could you set up in? you wou'd never arrive at the trust and credit of a guinea-bawd: you would have too much business of your own, eyer to mind other people's.

Luc. That is true, indeed.

Wel. Then, as a certain sign that there was nothing more to be hop'd for, the maids at the chocolate-houses found us out, and laugh'd at us; our billet-doux lay there neglected for waste paper; we were cry'd down so low we could not pass upon the city; and became so notorious in our galloping way, from one end of the town to t'other, that at last we could hardly compass a competent change of petticoats to disguise us to the hackney-coachmen: and then it was near walking on foot indeed.

Luc. Nay, that I began to be afraid of.

Wel. To prevent which, with what youth and beauty was left, some experience, and the small remainder of fifteen hundred pounds a-piece, which amounted to bare two hundred between us both, I persuaded you to bring your person for a venture to the Indies. Every thing has succeeded in our voyage. I pass for your brother: one of the richest planters here happening to die just as we landed, I have claim'd kindred with him; so, without making his will, he has left us the credit of his relations to trade upon: we pass for his cousins, coming here to Surinam

Surimam chiefly upon his invitation : we live in reputation ; have the best acquaintance of the place ; and we shall see our account isn't, I warrant you.

Luc. I must rely upon you —

Enter Widow Lackitt.

Wid. Mr. Welldon, your servant. Your servant, Mrs. Lucy. I am an ill visitor, but 'tis not too late, I hope, to bid you welcome to this side of the world.

[*Salutes Lucy.*]

Wel. Gad so, I beg your pardon, widow, I should have done the civilities of my house before : but, as you say, 'tis not too late, I hope — [*Going to kiss her.*]

Wid. What ! you think now this was a civil way of begging a kiss ; and by my troth, if it were, I see no harm in't : 'tis a pitiful favour indeed that is not worth asking for ; tho' I have known a woman speak plainer before now, and not understood neither.

Wel. Not under my roof. Have at you, widow —

Wid. Why, that's well said, spoke like a younger brother, that deserves to have a widow — [*He kisses her.*] You're a younger brother, I know, by your kissing.

Wel. How so, pray ?

Wid. Why you kiss as if you expected to be paid for't. You have birdlime upon your lips. You stick so close, there's no getting rid of you.

Wel. I am a-kin to a younger brother.

Wid. So much the better : we widows are commonly the better for younger brothers.

Luc. Better, or worse, most of you. But you won't be much better for him, I can tell you — [*Afde.*]

Wel. I was a younger brother ; but an uncle of my mother's has maliciously left me an estate, and I'm afraid, spoil'd my fortune.

Wid. No, no ; an estate will never spoil your fortune. I have a good estate myself, thank heav'n, and a kind husband that left it behind him.

Wel. Thank heav'n, that took him away from it, widow, and left you behind him.

Wid. Nay, heav'n's will must be done ; he's in a better place. [*Wid.*]

Wid. A better place for you, no doubt on't : now you may look about you ; chuse for yourself, Mrs. Lackitt, that's your business ; for I know your design to marry again.

Wid. O dear ! not I, I protest and swear : I don't design it : but I won't swear neither ; one does not know what may happen to tempt one.

Wid. Why, a lusty young fellow may happen to tempt you.

Wid. Nay, I'll do nothing rashly : I'll resolve against nothing. The devil, they say, is very busy upon these occasions, especially with the widows. But if I am to be tempted, it must be with a young man, I promise you—Mrs. Lucy, your brother is a very pleasant gentleman : I came about business to him, but he turns every thing into merriment.

Wid. Business, Mrs. Lackitt ? Then, I know, you wou'd have me to yourself. Pray leave us together, sister. [Ex. Luc. What am I drawing upon myself here ?] [Aside.]

Wid. You have taken a very pretty house here ; every thing so neat about you already. I hear you are laying out for a plantation.

Wid. Why, yes truly, I like the country, and wou'd buy a plantation, if I cou'd reasonably.

Wid. O ! by all means reasonably.

Wid. If I cou'd have one to my mind, I wou'd think of settling among you.

Wid. O ! you can't do better. Indeed we can't pretend to have so good company for you, as you had in England ; but we shall make very much of you. For my own part, I assure you, I shall think myself very happy to be more particularly known to you.

Wid. Dear Mrs. Lackitt, you do me too much honour.

Wid. Then as to a plantation, Mr. Welldon, you know I have several to dispose of. Mr. Lackitt, I thank him, has left, tho' I say it, the richest widow upon the place : therefore I may afford to use you better than other people can. You shall have one upon any reasonable terms.

Wid. That's a fair offer indeed.

Wid. You shall find me as easy as any body you can have to do with, I assure you. Pray try me ; I wou'd have

Wid. have you try me, Mr. *Welldon*. Well, I like that name of yours exceedingly, Mr. *Welldon*.

Wel. My name!

Wid. O exceedingly! if any thing cou'd persuade me to alter my own name, I verily believe nothing in the world would do it so soon as to be call'd Mrs. *Welldon*.

Wel. Why, indeed *Welldon* does sound something better than *Lackitt*.

Wid. O! a great deal better. Not that there is so much in a name neither. But I don't know, there is something; I shou'd like mightily to be call'd Mrs. *Welldon*.

Wel. I'm glad you like my name.

Wid. Of all things. But then there's the misfortune; one can't change one's name, without changing one's condition.

Wel. You'll hardly think it worth that, I believe.

Wid. Think it worth what, sir? changing my condition? indeed, sir, I think it worth every thing. But, alas! Mr. *Welldon*, I have been a widow but six weeks; 'tis too soon to think of changing one's condition yet; indeed it is: pray don't desire it of me; not but that you may persuade me to any thing sooner than any person in the world—

Wel. Who, I, Mrs. *Lackitt*!

Wid. Indeed you may, Mr. *Welldon*, sooner than any man living. Lord, there's a great deal in saving a decency; I never minded it before: well, I'm glad you spoke first to excuse my modesty. But what, modesty means nothing, and is the virtue of a girl, that does not know what she would at it; a widow should be wiser. Now I will own to you; but I won't confess neither; I have had a great respect for you a great while: I beg your pardon, sir, and I must declare to you, indeed I must, if you desire to dispose of all I have in the world, in an honourable way, which I don't pretend to be any way deserving your consideration, my fortune and person, if you won't understand me without telling you so, are both at your service. Gad so! another time—

Enter Stanmore to 'em.

Stan. So, Mrs. *Lackitt*, your widowhood is weaning apace:

page : I see which way 'tis going. *Welldon*, you're a happy man. The women and their favours come home to you.

Wid. A fiddle of favour, Mr. *Stannmore* : I am a lone woman, you know it, left in a great deal of business, and business must be follow'd or lost. I have several stocks and plantations upon my hands, and other things to dispose of, which Mr. *Welldon* may have occasion for.

Wel. We were just upon the brink of a bargain, as you came in.

Stan. Let me drive it on for you.

Wel. So you must, I believe, you or somebody for me.

Stan. I'll stand by you : I understand more of this business, than they can pretend to.

Wel. I don't pretend to't; 'tis quite out of my way indeed.

Stan. If the widow gets you to herself, she will certainly be too hard for you : I know her of old ; she has no conscience in a corner ; a very Jew in a bargain, and would circumcise you to get more of you.

Wel. Is this true, widow ?

Wid. Speak as you find, Mr. *Welldon* : I have offer'd you very fair : think upon't, and let me hear of you ; the sooner the better, Mr. *Welldon* — [Exit.]

Stan. I assure you, my friend, she'll cheat you if she can.

Wel. I don't know that ; but I can cheat her, if I will.

Stan. Cheat her ? how ?

Wel. I can marry her ; and then I'm sure I have it in my power to cheat her.

Stan. Can you marry her ?

Wel. Yes, faith, so she says : her pretty person and fortune (which, one with the other, you know, are not contemptible) are both at my service.

Stan. Contemptible ! very considerable, I'gad ; very desirable : why, she's worth ten thousand pounds, man ; a clear estate : no charge upon't, but a boorily son : he indeed was to have half ; but his father begot him, and she breeds him up, not to know or have more than she has a mind to : and she has a mind to something else, it seems.

Wel.

Wel. There's a great deal to be made of this —

Stan. A handsome fortune may be made on't; and I advise you to't, by all means. {*Musing.*

Wel. To marry her! an old, wanton witch! I hate her.

Stan. No matter for that: let her go to the devil for you. She'll cheat her son of a good estate for you: that's a perquisite of a widow's portion always.

Wel. I have a design, and will follow her at least; 'till I have a pen'worth of the plantation.

Stan. I speak as a friend, when I advise you to marry her. For 'tis directly against the interest of my own family. My cousin Jack has belabour'd her a good while that way.

Wel. What! honest Jack! I'll not hinder him. I'll give over the thoughts of her.

Stan. He'll make nothing on't; she does not care for him. I'm glad you have her in your power.

Wel. I may be able to serve him.

Stan. Here's a ship come into the river; I was in hopes it had been from *England*.

Wel. From *England*?

Stan. No, I was disappointed; I long to see this handsome cousin of yours: the picture you gave me of her has charm'd her.

Wel. You'll see whether it has flatter'd her or no, in a little time. If she recover'd of that illness, that was the reason of her staying behind us; I know she will come with the first opportunity. We shall see her, or hear of her death.

Stan. We'll hope the best. The ships from *England* are expected every day.

Wel. What ship is this?

Stan. A rover, a buccaneer, a trader in slaves: that's the commodity we deal in, you know. If you have a curiosity to see our manner of marketing, I'll wait upon you.

Wel. We'll take my sister with us. —

[*Exitant.*

S C E N E,

S C E N E, *an open place.*

Enter Lieutenant-Governor and Blandford.

Gov. There's no resisting your fortune, *Blandford*; you draw all the prizes.

Blan. I draw for our lord governor, you know; his fortune favours me.

Gov. I grudge him nothing this time; but if fortune had favour'd me in the last sale, the fair slave had been mine; *Clemene* had been mine.

Blas. Are you still in love with her?

Gov. Every day more in love with her.

Enter Capt. Driver, teaz'd and pull'd about by Widow Lackitt and several planters. Enter at another door *Welldon, Lucy, Stanmore.*

Wid. Here have I six slaves in my lot, and not a man among 'em; all women and children; what can I do with 'em, captain? pray consider, I am a woman myself, and can't get my own slaves as some of my neighbours do.

1 Plan. I have all men in mine; pray, captain, let the men and women be mingled together, for procreation-sake, and the good of the plantation.

2 Plan. Ay, ay, a man and a woman, captain, for the good of the plantation.

Capt. Let 'em mingle together and be damn'd, what care I? would you have me pimp for the good of the plantation?

1 Plan. I am a constant customer, captain.

Wid. I am always ready money to you, captain.

1 Plan. For that matter, mistress, my money is as ready as yours.

Wid. Pray hear me, captain.

Capt. Look you, I have done my part by you; I have brought the number of slaves you bargain'd for; if your lots have not pleas'd you, you must draw again among yourselves.

3 Plan. I am contented with my lot.

4 Plan. I am very well satisfied.

3 Plan.

3 Plan. We'll have no drawing again.

Capt. Do you hear, mistress; you may hold your tongue; for my part, I expect my money.

Wid. Captain, nobody questions or scruples the payment. But I won't hold my tongue; 'tis too much to pray and pay too: one may speak for one's own, I hope.

Capt. Well, what wou'd you say?

Wid. I say no more than I can make out.

Capt. Out with it then.

Wid. I say, things have not been so fair carry'd as they might have been. How do I know how you have jugged together in my absence? you drew the lots before I came, I'm sure.

Capt. That's your own fault, mistress; you might have come sooner.

Wid. Then here's a prince, as they say, among the slaves, and you set him down to go as a common man.

Capt. Have you a mind to try what a man he is? you'll find him no more than a common man at your business.

Wid. Sir, you're a scurvy fellow to talk at this rate to me. If my husband were alive, gadsbodykins, you wou'd not use me so.

Capt. Right, mistress, I would not use you at all.

Wid. Not use me! your betters every inch of you, I wou'd have you to know, wou'd be glad to use me, sirrah. Marry come up here, who are you, I trow? you begin to think yourself a captain, forsooth, because we call you so. You forget yourself as fast as you can; but I remember you; I know you for a pitiful pastry fellow, as you are; an upstart to prosperity; one that is but just come acquainted with cleanliness, and that never saw five shillings of your own, without deserving to be hang'd for 'em.

Gov. She has giv'n you a broadside, Captain; you'll stand up to her.

Capt. Hang her, stink-pot, I'll come no nearer.

Wid. By this good light, it wou'd make a woman do a thing she never design'd; marry again, tho' she were sure to repent it, to be reveng'd of such a——

J. Stan.

J. Stan. What's the matter, Mrs. Lackitt? can I serve you?

Wid. No, no, you can't serve me; you are for serving yourself, I'm sure. Pray go about your business, I have none for you: you know I have told you so. Lord! how can you be so troublesome? nay, so unconscionable, to think that every rich widow must throw herself away upon a young fellow that has nothing?

Stan. Jack, you are answer'd, I suppose.

J. Stan. I'll have another pluck at her.

Wid. Mr. Welldon, I am a little out of order; but pray bring your sister to dine with me: gad's my life, I'm out of all patience with that pitiful fellow; my flesh rises at him: I can't stay in the place where he is—— [Exit.

Blas. Captain, you have us'd the widow very familiarly.

Capt. This is my way; I have no design, and therefore am not over civil. If she had ever a handsome daughter to wheedle her out of; or if I could make any thing of her booby son.

Wel. I may improve that hint, and make something of him. [Aside.

Gov. She's very rich.

Capt. I'm rich myself. She has nothing that I want: I have no leaks to stop. Old women are fortune-menders. I have made a good voyage, and wou'd reap the fruits of my labour. We plow the deep, my masters, but our harvest is on shore. I'm for a young woman.

Stan. Look about, captain, there's one ripe, and ready for the fickle.

Capt. A woman indeed! I will be acquainted with her: who is she?

Wel. My sister, sir.

Capt. Wou'd I were a-kin to her: if she were my sister, she should never go out of the family. What say you, mistress? you expect I should marry you, I suppose.

Luc. I shan't be disappointed, if you don't. [Turning away.

Wel. She won't break her heart, sir.

Capt. But I mean——

[Following her.]

Wel.

Wel. And I mean—— [Going between him and Lucy.
That you must not think of her without marrying.

Capt. I mean so too.

Wel. Why then your meaning's out.

Capt. You're very short.

Wel. I will grow, and be taller for you.

Capt. I shall grow angry, and swear.

Wel. You'll catch no fish then.

Capt. I don't well know whether he designs to affront me, or no.

Stan. No, no, he's a little familiar; 'tis his way.

Capt. Say you so; nay, I can be as familiar as he, if that be it. Well, sir, look upon me full: what say you? how do you like me for a brother-in-law?

Wel. Why yes, faith, you'll do my business, [Turning him about.] If we can agree about my sister's.

Capt. I don't know whether your sister will like me, or not: I can't say much to her: but I have money enough: and if you are her brother, as you seem to be a kin to her, I know that will recommend me to you.

Wel. This is your market for slaves; my sister is a free woman, and must not be dispos'd of in public. You shall be welcome to my house, if you please: and, upon better acquaintance, if my sister likes you, and I like your offers——

Capt. Very well, sir, I'll come and see her.

Gov. Where are the slaves, captain? they are long a-coming.

Blaz. And who is this prince that's fallen to my lot, for the lord governor? let me know something of him, that I may treat him accordingly; who is he?

Capt. He's the devil of a fellow, I can tell you; a prince every inch of him: you have paid dear enough for him, for all the good he'll do you: I was forc'd to clap him in irons, and did not think the ship safe neither. You are in hostility with the Indians, they say; they threaten you daily: you had best have an eye upon him.

Blaz. But who is he?

Gov. And how do you know him to be a prince?

Capt.

Capt. He is son and heir to the great king of *Angola* ; a mischievous monarch in those parts, who, by his good will, would never let any of his neighbours be in quiet. This son was his general, a plaguy fighting fellow : I have formerly had dealings with him for slaves, which he took prisoners, and have got pretty roundly by him. But the wars being at an end, and nothing more to be got by the trade of that country, I made bold to bring the prince along with me.

Gov. How could you do that ?

Blan. What ! steal a prince out of his own country ? impossible !

Capt. 'Twas hard indeed ; but I did it. You must know this *Oroonoko* —

Blan. Is that his name ?

Capt. Ay, *Oroonoko*.

Gov. *Oroonoko* ?

Capt. Is naturally inquisitive about the men and manners of the white nations. Because I could give him some account of the other parts of the world, I grew very much into his favour : in return of so great an honour, you know I cou'd do no less upon my coming away, than invite him on board me : never having been in a ship, he appointed his time, and I prepar'd my entertainment. He came the next evening as privately as he cou'd, with about some twenty along with him. The punch went round ; and as many of his attendants as wou'd be dangerous, I sent dead drunk on shore ; the rest we secur'd : and so you have the prince *Oroonoko*.

1 *Plan.* Gad-a-mercy, captain, there you were with him, i'faith.

2 *Plan.* Such men as you are fit to be employ'd in publick affairs : the plantation will thrive by you.

3 *Plan.* Industry should be encourag'd.

Capt. There's nothing done without it, boys. I have made my fortune this way.

Blan. Unheard-of villainy !

Stan. Barbarous treachery !

Blan. They applaud him for't.

Gov. But, captain, methinks you have taken a great

desk

deal of pains for this prince Oroonoko ; why did you part with him at the common rate of slaves ?

Capt. Why, lieutenant-governor, I'll tell you ; I did design to carry him to *England*, to have show'd him there ; but I found him troublesome upon my hands, and I'm glad I'm rid of him.—Oh, ho, hark they come.

Black slaves, men, women, and children, pass across the stage by two and two ; Aboan, and others of Oroonoko's attendants, two and two : Oroonoko last of all in chains.

Luc. Are all these wretches slaves ?

Stan. All sold, they and their posterity all slaves.

Luc. O miserable fortune !

Blan. Most of 'em know no better ! they were born so, and only change their masters. But a prince born only to command, betray'd and sold ! my heart drops blood for him.

Capt. Now, governor, here he comes, pray observe him.

Oro. So, sir, you have kept your word with me.

Capt. I am a better christian, I thank you, than to keep it with a heathen.

Oro. You are a christian ; be a christian still :
If you have any God that teaches you
To break your word, I need not curse you more ;
Let him cheat you, as you are false to me.
You faithful followers of my better fortune !
We have been fellow-soldiers in the field ;

[Embracing his friends.]

Now we are fellow-slaves. This last farewell.
Be sure of one thing that will comfort us,
Whatever world we next are thrown upon,
Cannot be worse than this.

[All slaves go off, but Oroonoko.]

Capt. You see what a bloody pagan he is, governor ; but I took care that none of his followers should be in the same lot with him, for fear they should undertake some desperate action, to the danger of the colony.

Oro. Live still in fear ; it is the villain's curse,
And will revenge my chains ; fear ev'n me,

Who

Who have no pow'r to hurt thee. Nature abhors,
 And drives thee out from the society
 And commerce of mankind, for breach of faith.
 Men live and prosper but in mutual trust,
 A confidence of one another's truth :
 That thou hast violated. I have done.
 I know my fortune, and submit to it.

Gov. Sir, I am sorry for your fortune, and would help it, if I could.

Blan. Take off his chains. You know your condition ; but you are fallen into honourable hands : you are the lord governr's slave, who will use you nobly : in his absence it shall be thy care to serve you.

{Blandford applying to him.

Oro. I hear you, but I can believe no more.

Gov. Captain, I'm afraid the world won't speak so honourably of this action of yours, as you would have 'em.

Capt. I have the money. Let the world speak and be damn'd, I care not.

Oro. I would forget myself. Be satisfy'd, [To Blan.] I am above the rank of common slaves : Let that content you. The christian there, that knows me, For his own sake will not discover more.

Capt. I have other matters to mind. You have him, and much good may do you with your prince. [Exit.

The planters pulling and staring at Oroonoko.

Blan. What would you have there ? you stare as if you never saw a man before. Stand further off.

{Turns 'em away.

Oro. Let 'em stare on.
 I am unfortunate, but not ashamed
 Of being so : no, let the guilty blush,
 The white man that betray'd me : honest black
 Disdains to change its colour. I am ready :
 Where must I go ? dispose me as you please.
 I am not well acquainted with my fortune,
 But must learn to know it better : so I know, you say :
 Degrees make all things easy.

Blan. All things shall be easy.

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O

Oro.

Oro. Tear off this pomp, and let me know myself:
 The slavish habit best becomes me now.
 Hard fare, and whips, and chains may overpow'r
 The trailer flesh, and bow my body down :
 But there's another, nobler part of me,
 Out of your reach, which you can never tame.

Blan. You shall find nothing of this wretchedness
 You apprehend. We are not monsters all.
 You seem unwilling to disclose yourself:
 Therefore, for fear the mentioning your name
 Should give you new disquiets, I presume
 To call you Cæsar.

Oro. I am myself; but call me what you please.
 Stan. A very good name, Cæsar.

Gow. And very fit for his character.

Oro. Was Cæsar then a slave?
 Gow. I think he was; to pirates too: he was a great
 conqueror, but unfortunate in his friends——

Oro. His friends were christians?

Blan. No.

Oro. No! that's strange.

Gow. And murder'd by 'em.

Oro. I would be Cæsar there. Yet I will live!

Blan. Live to be happier.

Oro. Do what you will with me.

Blan. I'll wait upon you, attend, and serve you.

[Exit with Oroonoko.

Luc. Well, if the captain had brought this prince's
 country along with him, and would make me queen of
 it, I would not have him, after doing so base a thing.

Wel. He's a man to thrive in the world, sister: he'll
 make you the better jointure.

Luc. Hang him, nothing can prosper with him.

Stan. Enquire into the great estates, and you will find
 most of 'em depend upon the same title of honesty: the
 men who raise 'em first are much of the captain's principles.

Wel. Ay, ay, as you say, let him be dam'd for the
 good of his family. Come, sister, we are invited to din-
 ner.

Cæs. Stanmore, you dine with me.

[Exit.

A C T H. SCENE I.

SCENE Widow Lackitt's House.

Enter Widow Lackitt and Welldon.

Wel. **T**HIS is so great a favour, I don't know how to receive it.

Wid. O dear sir! you know how to receive and how to return a favour, as well as any body, I don't doubt it: 'tis not the first you have had from our sex, I suppose.

Wel. But this is so unsuspected.

Wid. Lord, how can you say so, Mr. Welldon? I won't believe you. Don't I know you handsome gentlemen expect every thing that a woman can do for you? and by my troth you're in the right on't: I think one can't do too much for a handsome gentleman; and so you shall find it.

Wel. I shall never have such an offer again, that's certain: what shall I do? I am mightily divided—

[*Pretending a cough.*

Wid. Divided! O dear, I hope not so, sir. If I marry, truly I expect to have you to myself.

Wel. There's no danger of that, Mrs. Lackitt. I am divided in my thoughts. My father upon his death-bed oblig'd me to see my sister dispos'd of, before I married myself. 'Tis that sticks upon me. They say indeed promises are to be broken or kept; and I know 'tis a foolish thing to be tied to a promise; but I can't help it: I don't know how to get rid of it.

Wid. Is that all?

Wel. All in all to me. The commands of a dying father, you know, ought to be obey'd.

Wid. And so they may.

Wel. Impossible, to do me any good.

Wid. They shan't be your hinderance. You would have a husband for your sister, you say: he must be very well to pass too in the world, I suppose?

O 2

Wel.

Wel. I would not throw her away.

Wid. Then marry her out of hand to the sea captain you were speaking of.

Wel. I was thinking of him, but 'tis to no purpose: she hates him.

Wid. Does she hate him? nay 'tis no matter, an impudent rascal as he is, I would not advise her to marry him.

Wel. Can you think of nobody else?

Wid. Let me see.

Wel. Ay, pray do: I should be loth to part with my good fortune in you for so small a matter as a sister: but you find how it is with me.

Wid. Well remembered, i'faith: well, if I thought you would like of it, I have a husband for her: what do you think of my son?

Wel. You don't think of it yourself.

Wid. I protest but I do: I am in earnest, if you ate. he shall marry her within this half hour, if you'll give your consent to it.

Wel. I give my consent! I'll answer for my sister, she shall have him: you may be sure I shall be glad to get over the difficulty.

Wid. No more to be said then, that difficulty is over. But I vow and swear you frightened me, Mr. Williton. If I had not had a son now for your sister, what must I have done, do you think? were not you an ill natur'd thing to boggle at a promise? I could break twenty for you.

Wel. I am the more oblig'd to you: but this son will save all.

Wid. He's in the house; I'll go and bring him myself. [Going.] You would do well to break the business to your sister: she's within, I'll send her to you —

[Going again, comes back.]

Wel. Pray do.

Wid. But d'you hear? perhaps she may stand upon her maidenly behaviour, and blush, and play the fool, and delay: but don't be answer'd so: what! she is not a girl at these years: shew your authority, and tell her roundly, she must be married immediately. I'll manage my son, I warrant you —

[Goes out in haste.]

Wel.

Wel. The widow's in haste, I see: I thought I had laid a rub in the road, about my sister; but she has stept over that. She's making way for herself as fast as she can; but little thinks where she is going: I could tell her she is going to play the fool: but people don't love to hear of their faults: besides, that is not my business at present.

Enter Lucy.

So, sister, I have a husband for you—

Luc. With all my heart: I don't know what confinement marriage may be to the men, but I'm sure the women have no liberty without it. I am for any thing that will deliver me from the care of a reputation, which I begin to find impossible to preserve.

Wel. I'll ease you of that care: you must be married immediately.

Luc. The sooner the better; for I am quite tir'd of setting up for a husband. The widow's foolish son is the man, I suppose.

Wel. I consider'd your constitution, sister; and finding you would have occasion for a fool, I have provided accordingly.

Luc. I don't know what occasion I may have for a fool when I'm married: but I find none but fools have occasion to marry.

Wel. Since he is to be a fool then, I thought it better for you to have one of his mother's making than your own; 'twill save you the trouble.

Luc. I thank you; you take a great deal of pains for me: but, pray tell me, what are you doing for yourself all this while?

Wel. You were never true to your own secrets, and therefore I won't trust you with mine. Only remember this, I am your elder sister, and consequently laying my breeches aside, have as much occasion for a husband as you can have. I have a man in my eye, be satisfy'd.

Enter Widow Lackitt, with her son Daniel.

Wid. Come, *Daniel*, hold up thy head, child; look like a man: you must not take it as you have done. God's my life! there's nothing to be done with twirling your hat, man.

Dan. Why, mother, what's to be done then?

Wid. Why look me in the face, and mind what I say to you.

Dan. Marry, who's the fool then? what shall I get by minding what you say to me?

Wid. Mrs. *Lucy*, the boy is bashful; don't discourage him: pray come a little forward, and let him salute you.

[*Going between Lucy and Daniel.*]

Luc. A fine husband I am to have truly. [To *Welldon*.]

Wid. Come, *Daniel*, you must be acquainted with this gentlewoman.

Dan. Nay, I'm not proud, that is not my fault: I am presently acquainted when I know the company; but this gentlewoman is a stranger to me.

Wid. She is your mistress; I have spoke a good word for you; make her a bow, and go and kiss her.

Dan. Kiss her! have a care what you say; I warrant she scorns your words. Such fine folks are not us'd to be slopt and kiss'd. Do you think I don't know that, mother?

Wid. Try her, try her, man. [*Daniel bows, she thrusts him forward.*] Why that's well done; go nearer her.

Dan. Is the devil in the woman? why so I can go nearer her, if you wou'd let a body alone. [To his mother.] Cry you mercy, forsooth; my mother is always shaming one before company: she would have me as unmannerly as herself, and offer to kiss you? [To *Lucy*.]

Wel. Why, won't you kiss her?

Dan. Why, pray, may I?

Wel. Kiss her, kiss her, man.

Dan. Marry, and I will. [*Kisses her.*] Gadooks! she kisses rarely! An'please you, mistress, and seeing my mother will have it so, I don't much care if I kiss you again. forsooth..

[*Kiss her again.*]

Luc.

Luc. Well, how do you like me now?

Dan. Like you! marry, I don't know. You have bewitch'd me, I think: I was never so in my born days before.

Wid. You must marry this fine woman, *Daniel*.

Dan. Hey-day! marry her! I was never marry'd in all my life. What must I do with her then, mother?

Wid. You must live with her, eat and drink with her, go to bed with her, and sleep with her.

Dan. Nay, marry, if I must go to bed with her, I shall never sleep, that's certain: shell break me of my rest, quite and clean, I tell you before-hand. As for eating and drinking with her, why I have a good stomach, and can play my part in any company. But how do you think I can go to bed to a woman I don't know?

Wel. You shall know her better.

Dan. Say you so, sif?

Wel. Kiss her again. [Daniel kisses Lucy.]

Dan. Nay, kissing I find will make us presently acquainted, we'll steal into a corner to practise a little, and then I shall be able to do any thing.

Wel. The young man mends apace.

Wid. Pray don't baulk him.

Dan. Mother, mother, if you'll stay in the room by me, and promise not to leave me, I don't care for once if I venture to go to bed with her.

Wid. There's a good child; go in and put on thy best cloaths; pluck up a spirit; I'll stay in the room by thee, she won't hurt thee, I warrant thee.

Dan. Nay, as to that matter, I'm not afraid of her; I'll give her as good as she brings; I have a Rowland for her Oliver, and so you may tell her. [Exit.]

Wid. Mrs. Lucy, we shan't stay for you: you are in a readiness, I suppose.

Wel. She's always ready to do what I would have her, I must say that for my sifter.

Wid. 'Twill be her own another day. Mr. Willdony, we'll marry 'em out of hand, and then —

Wel. And then, Mrs. Lackitt, look to yourself. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

Enter Oroonoko and Blandford.

Oro. You grant I have good reason to suspect
All the professions you can make to me.

Blan. Indeed you have.

Oro. The dog that sold me did profess as much
As you can do — But yet I know not why —
Whether it is because I'm fall'n so low,
And have no more to fear — That is not it;
I am a slave no longer than I please.
'Tis something nobler — Being just myself,
I am inclining to think others so:
'Tis that prevails upon me to believe you.

Blan. You may believe me.

Oro. I do believe you.

From what I know of you, you are no fool:
Fools only are the knaves, and live by tricks:
Wise men may thrive without 'em, and be honest.

Blan. They won't all take your counsel — [Apropos.]

Oro. You know my story, and you say you are
A friend to my misfortunes: that's a name
Will teach you what you owe yourself and me,

Blan. I'll study to deserve to be your friend;
When once our noble governor arrives,
With him you will not need my interest:
He is too generous not to feel your wrongs.
But be assur'd I will employ my pow'r,
And find the means to send you home again.

Oro. I thank you, sir — My honest, wretched friends!
Their chains are heavy: they have hardly stood [Sighing].
So kind a master. May I ask you, sir? [To Blan.]
What is become of 'em? perhaps I should not.
You will forgive a stranger.

Blan. I'll enquire,
And use my best endeavours, where they are;
To have 'em gently us'd.

Oro.

Oro. Once more I thank you.
 You offer every cordial that can keep
 My hopes alive, to wait a better day.
 What friendly care can do, you have apply'd.
 But, Oh ! I have a grief admits no cure.

Blan. You do not know, sir —

Oro. Can you raise the dead ?
 Pursue and overtake the wings of time ?
 And bring about again the hours, the days,
 The years that made me happy ?

Blan. That is not to be done.

Oro. No, there is nothing to be done for me.

[Kneeling and kissing the earth.]

Thou God ador'd ! thou ever glorious sun !
 If she be yet on earth, send me a beam
 Of thy all-seeing power to light me to her.
 Or if thy sister goddess has preferr'd
 Her beauty to the skies to be a star ;
 O tell me where she shines, that I may stand
 Whole nights, and gaze upon her.

Blan. I am rude, and interrupt you.

Oro. I am troublesome :

But pray give me your pardon. My swoll'n heart
 Bursts out its passage, and I must complain.
 O ! can you think of nothing dearer to me ?
 Dearer than liberty, my country, friends,
 Much dearer than my life ? that I have lost.
 The tend'rest, best belov'd, and loving wife.

Blan. Alas ! I pity you.

Oro. Do, pity me :
 Pity's a kin to love ; and every thought
 Of that soft kind is welcome to my soul.
 I would be pity'd here.

Blan. I dare not ask

More than you please to tell me : but if you
 Think it convenient to let me know.
 Your story, I dare promise you to bear
 A part in your distress, if not assist you.

Oro. Thou honest-hearted man ! I wanted such
 Just such a friend as thou art, that would fit

Still as the night, and let me talk whole days—
Of my *Imainda*. O ! I'll tell thee all
From first to last ; and pray observe me well.

Blan. I will most heedfully,

Oro. There was a stranger in my father's court,
Valu'd and honour'd much : he was a white,
The first & ever saw of your complexion :
He chang'd his gods for ours, and so grew great ;
Of many virtues, and so fam'd in arms,
He still commanded all my father's wars :
I was bred under him. One fatal day,
The armies joining, he before me stept,
Receiving in his breast a poison'd dart
Level'd at me ; he dy'd within my arms.
I've tir'd you already..

Blan. Pray go on,

Oro. He left an only daughter, whom he brought
An infant to *Angola*. When I came
Back to the court, a happy conqueror ;
Humanity oblig'd me to condole
With this sad virgin for a father's loss,
Loss for my safety. I presented her
With all the slaves of battle to atone
Her father's ghost. But when I saw her face,
And heard her speak, I offer'd up myself
To be the sacrifice. She how'd and blush'd :
I wonder'd and ador'd. The sacred pow'r
That had subdu'd me, then inspir'd my tongue,
Inclin'd her heart ; and all our talk was love.

Blan. Then you were happy.

Oro. O ! I was too happy.

I marry'd her : and though my country's custom
Indulg'd the privilege of many wives,
I swore myself never to know but her.
She grew with child, and I grew happiest still.
O my *Imoinda* ! but it could not last,
Her fatal beauty reach'd my father's ears :
He sent for her to court, where, cursed coast !
No woman comes, but for his amorous use.
He raging to possess her, she was forc'd

To.

O R O O N O' K O.

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To own herself my wife. The furious king
Started at incest: but grown desperate,
Not daring to enjoy what he desir'd;
In mad revenge, which I could never learn,
He poison'd her, or sent her far, far off,
Far from my hopes ever to see her more.

Blan. Most barbarous of fathers! the sad tale
Has struck me dumb with wonder.

Oro. I have done.
I'll trouble you no farther: now and then,
A sigh will have its way; that shall be all.

Enter Stanmore.

Stan. Blansford, the lieutenant-governor is gone to your plantation. He desires you would bring the royal slave with you. The sight of his fair mistress, he says, is an entertainment for a prince; he would have his opinion of her.

Oro. Is he a lover?

Blan. So he says himself: he flatters a beautiful slave, that I have, and calls her mistress.

Oro. Must he then flatter her to call her mistress? I pity the proud man, who thinks himself above being in love: What, tho' she be a slave, She may deserve him.

Blan. You shall judge of that, when you see her, Sir.

Oro. I go with you.

{Exeunt.

S C E N E A Plantation.

Lieut. Governor following Imoinda.

Grov. I have disturb'd you, I confess my fault,
My fair Clemene; but begin again,
And I will listen to your mournful song,
Sweet as the soft complaining nightingale's,
While every note calls out my trembling soul,
And leaves me silent; as the midnight graves,
Only to shelter you; sing, sing again,
And let me wonder at the many ways
You have to ravish me.

O 6.

Imoinda.

Imo. O ! I can weep
Enough for you, and me, if that will please you.

Gov. You must not weep : I come to dry your tears,
And raise you from your sorrow. Look upon me,
Look with the eyes of kind indulging love,
That I may have full cause for what I say :
I come to offer you your liberty,
And be myself the slave. You turn away [Following her]
But every thing becomes you. I may take
This pretty hand : I know your modesty
Would draw it back ; but you would take it ill,
If I should let it go, I know you wou'd.
You shall be gently forc'd to please yourself;
That you will thank me for.

[She struggles, and gets her hand from him, then he
offers to kiss her.]

Nay if you struggle with me, I must take——

Imo. You may, my life, that I can part with freely.
[Exits.]

Enter Blandford, Stanmore, Ornonoko to him.

Blan. So, governor, we don't disturb you, I hope :
your mistress has left you : you were making love, she's
thankful for the honour, I suppose.

Gov. Quite insensible to all I say, and do :
When I speak to her, she sighs, or weeps.
But never answers me as I would have her.

Stan. There's something nearer than her slavery, that
touches her.

Blan. What do her fellow-slaves say of her; can't they
find the cause ?

Gov. Some of 'em, who pretend to be wiser than the
rest, and hate her, I suppose, for being us'd better than
they are, will need have it she's with child.

Blan. Poor wretch ; if it be so, I pity her & her child.
She has lost a husband, that perhaps was dear.
To her, and then you cannot blame her.

Oro. If it be so, indeed you cannot blame her.

Sighing
Sighing
Sighing

Gov. No, no, it is not so; if it be so,
I still must love her: and desiring still,
I must enjoy her.

Blan. Try what you can do with fair means, and well
come.

Gov. I'll give you ten slaves for her.

Blan. You know she is our lord governor's: but if I
could dispose of her, I would not now, especially to you,

Gov. Why not to me?

Blan. I mean against her will. You are in love with
her.

And we all know what your desires would have:
Love stops at nothing but possession.

Were she within your pow'r, you do not know
How soon you would be tempted to forget
The nature of the deed, and, may be, act
A violence, you after would repent.

Oro. 'Tis godlike in you to protect the weak.

Gov. Fy, fy, I would not force her. Tho' she be
A slave, her mind is free, and should consent.

Oro. Such honour will engage her to consent:
And then, if you're in love, she's worth the having.
Shall we not see this wonder?

Gov. Have a care;
You have a heart, and she has conquering eyes.

Oro. I have a heart: but if it could be false
To my first vows, ever to love again,
These honest hands should tear it from my breast,
And throw the traitor from me. O! *Imoinda!*
Living or dead, I can be only thine.

Blan. *Imoinda* was his wife: she's either dead,
Or living, dead to him: forc'd from his arms
By an inhuman father. Another time
I'll tell you all. [To the *Gov.* and *Stan.*]

Stan. Hark! the slaves have done their work:
And now begins their evening merriment.

Blan. The men are all in, love with fair *Clement*
As much as you are: and the women hate her,
From an instinct of natural jealousy.
They sing, and dance, and try their little tricks

To

To entertain her, and divert her sadness,
May be she is among 'em; shall we see?

[Exitur.]

The SCENE drawn shew's the slaves, men, women and
children upon the ground, some rise and dance, others sing.
the following songs.

A SONG by Sir Harry Sheers.

Set by Mr. Courteville, and sung by the Boy to Miss Cross.

I.

*A Lass there lives upon the green,
Coud I her picture draw;
A brighter nymph was never seen,
That looks, and reigns a little queen,
And keeps the swains in awe.*

II.

*Her eyes are Cupid's darts and wings,
Her eye-brows are his bow;
Her falken bair the silver strings,
Which sure and swift destruction brings
To all the vale below.*

III.

*If Pastorella's dawning light
Can warm, and wound us so:
Her noon will shine so piercing bright,
Each glancing beam will kill outright,
And every swain subdued.*

A SONG by Mr. Cheek.

Set by Mr. Courteville, and sung by Mr. Leveridge.

I.

*Bright Cynthia's pow'r divinely great,
What heart is not obeying?
A thousand Cupids on her waist,
And in her eyes are playing.*

She

II.

*She seems the queen of love to reign,
For she alone dispenses
Such sweets, as best can entertain
The guest of all the senses.*

III.

*Her face a charming prospect brings :
Her breath gives balmy blisses :
I bear an angel, when she sings,
And taste of beau'n in kisses.*

IV.

*Four senses thus she feasts with joy,
From nature's richest treasure :
Let me the other sense employ,
And I shall die with pleasure.*

During the entertainment, the Governor, Blandford, Stanmore, Oroonoko, enter as spectators ; that ended, Captain Driver, Jack Stanmore, and several planters enter with their swords drawn. [A bell rings.

Capt. Where are you, governor ? make what haste you can

To save yourself, and the whole colony.

I bid 'em ring the bell.

Gov. What's the matter ?

J. Stan. The Indians are come down upon us : they have plunder'd some of the plantations already, and are marching this way, as fast as they can.

Gov. What can we do against 'em ?

Blan. We shall be able to make a stand, 'till more planters come in to us.

J. Stan. There are a great many more without, if you wou'd shew yourself, and put us in order.

Gov. There's no danger of the white slaves, they'll not stir : Blandford and Stanmore, come you along with me : some of you stay here to look after the black slaves.

[All go out but the Captain, and six Planters, who alarmer for Oroonoko.

I Plan.

i Plan. Ay, ay, let us alone.

Capt. In the first place we secure you, sir,
As an enemy to the government.

Oro. Are you there, sir? you are my constant friend.

i Plan. You will be able to do a great deal of mischief.

Capt. But we shall prevent you: bring the irons bi-
ther. He has the malice of a slave in him, and wou'd
be glad to be cutting his masters throats, I know him.
Chain his hands and feet, that he may not run over to
'em: if they have him, they shall carry him on their
backs, that I can tell 'em.

As they are chaining him, Blandford enters, runs to them.

Blan. What are you doing there?

Capt. Securing the main chance: this is a bosom-
enemy.

Blan. Away, you brutes: I'll answer with my life for
his behaviour; so tell the governor.

Capt. Plan. Well, sir, so we will.

[*Exeunt Capt. and Planters.*

Oro. Give me a sword, and I'll deserve your trust.

A party of Indians enter, burrying Imoinda among the
slaves; another party of Indians sustains them retreating,
followed at a distance by the Governor with the Planters:
Blandford, Oroonoko join them.

Blan. Hell, and the devil! they drive away our slaves
before our faces. Governor, can you stand tamely by,
and suffer this? *Clemene,* sir, your mistress is among 'em.

Gov. We throw ourselves away in the attempt to res-
cue 'em.

Oro. A lover cannot fall more glorious,
Than in the cause of love. He that deserves
His mistress' favour will not stay behind:
I'll lead you on, be bold, and follow me.

[*Oroonoko, at the head of the Planters, falls upon
the Indians with a great shout, beats them off.*

Enter Imoinda.

Imo. I'm toss'd about by my tempestuous fate,
And

And no where must have rest ; Indians, or English !
 Whoever has me, I am still a slave
 No matter whose I am, since I'm no more
 My royal master's ; since I'm his no more.
 O I was happy ! nay, I will be happy,
 In the dear thought that I am still his wife,
 Tho' far divided from him.

[Draws off to a corner of the stage.]

After a shout, enter the Governor with Oroonoko, Blanford, Stanmore, and Planters.

Gov. Thou glorious man ! thou something greater sure
 Than Caesar ever was ! that single arm
 Has sav'd us all ; accept our general thanks.

[All bow to Oroonoko.]

And what we can do more to recompence
 Such noble services, you shall command.

Clemene too shall thank you — she is safe —
 Look up, and bless your brave deliverer.

[Brings Clemene forward, looking down on the ground.]

Oro. Bless me indeed !

Blan. You start !

Oro. O all you gods !

Who govern this great world, and bring above
 Things strange, and unexpected, can it be ?

Gov. What is't you stare at so ?

Oro. Answer me some of you, you who have power,
 And have your senses free : or are you all
 Struck thro' with wonder too ? [Looking still fixt on her.]

Blan. What wou'd you know ?

Oro. My soul steals from my body thro' my eyes ;
 All that is left of life, I'll gaze away,
 And die upon the pleasure.

Gov. This is strange !

Oro. If you but mock me with your image here :
 If she be not Imoinda —

[She looks upon him, and falls into a swoon, he runs to her.]

Ha ! she faints !

Nay, then it must be she : it is Imoinda :
 My heart confesses her, and keeps her joy,

Te-

To welcome her to her own empire here.

I feel her all, in every part of me.

O ! let me press her in my eager arms,

Wake her to life, and with this kindling kiss

Give back that soul, she only sent to me.

[Kisses her.]

Gov. I am amaz'd !

Blan. I am as much as you.

Oro. Imoinda ! O ! thy Oroonoko calls.

[Imoinda coming to life.]

Imo. My Oroonoko ! O ! I can't believe

What any man can say. But if I am

To be deceiv'd, there's something in that name,

That voice, that face, [Staring on him.]

O ! if I know myself, I cannot be mistaken.

[Runs and embraces Oroonoko.]

Oro. Never here ;
You cannot be mistaken : I am yours,
Your Oroonoko, all that you would have,
Your tender loving husband.

Imo. All indeed
That I would have : my husband ! then I am
Alive, and waking to the joys I feel :
They were so great, I could not think 'em true.
But I believe all that you say to me ;
For truth itself, and everlasting love
Grows in this breast, and pleasure in these arms.

Oro. Take, take me all : enquire into my heart,
(You know the way to every secret there)
My heart, the sacred treasury of love :
And if, in absence, I have mis-employ'd
A mite from the rich store ; if I have spent
A wish, a sigh, but what I sent to you ;
May I be curs'd to wish, and sigh in vain,
And you not pity me.

Imo. O ! I believe,
And know you by myself. If these sad eyes,
Since last we parted, have beheld the face
Of any comfort ; or once wish'd to see
The light of any other heav'n, but you ;

May

May I be struck this moment blind, and lose
Your blessed sight, never to find you more.

Oro. *Imoinda!* O! this separation
Has made you dearer, if it can be so,
Than you were ever to me. You appear
Like a kind star to my benighted steps,
To guide me on my way to happiness;
I cannot miss it now. Governor, friend,
You think me mad: but let me bless you all,
Who, any way, have been the instruments
Of finding her again. *Imoinda's* found!
And every thing, that I would have in her.

[*Embracing her in the most passionate fondness.*

Stan. Where's your mistress now, governor?

Gov. Why, where most men's mistresses are forc'd to
be sometimes,
With her husband, it seems: but I won't lose her so.

[*Aside.*

Stan. He has sought lustily for her, and deserves her,
I'll say that for him.

Blas. Sir, we congratulate your happiness; I do most
heartily.

Gov. And all of us: but how it comes to pass——

Oro. That will require
More precious time than I can spare you now.
I have a thousand things to ask of her,
And she has many more to know of me.
But you have made me happier, I confess,
Acknowledge it, much happier, than I
Have words, or pow'r to tell you. Captain, you,
Ev'n you, who most have wrong'd me, I forgive.
I will not say you have betray'd me now:
I'll think you but the minister of fate,
To bring me to my lov'd *Imoinda* here.

Imo. How, how shall I receive you? how be worthy
Of such endearments, all this tenderness?
These are the transports of prosperity,
When fortune smiles upon us.

Oro. Let the fools,
Who follow fortune, live upon her smiles.

All

All our prosperity is plac'd in love,
 We have enough of that to make us happy.
 This little spot of earth you stand upon,
 Is more to me, than the extended plains,
 Of my great father's kingdom. Here I reign
 In full delights, in joys to pow'r unknown;
 Your love my empire, and your heart my throne.

[*Exeunt.*

A C T III. S C E N E I.

Enter Aboan with several Slaves, and Hottman.

Hot. **W**HAT! to be slaves to cowards! slaves to rogues! who can't defend themselves!

Abo. Who is this fellow? he talks as if he were acquainted with our design: is he one of us?

Slave. Not yet: but he will be glad to make one, *[Aside to his own gang.]*

Abo. He makes a mighty noise,
Hot. Go, sneak in corners; whisper out your griefs,
 For fear your masters hear you: cringe and crouch
 Under the bloody whip, like beaten curs,
 That lick their wounds, and know no other cure.
 All, wretches all! you feel their cruelty,
 As much as I can feel, but dare not groan.
 For my part, while I have a life and tongue,
 I'll curse the authors of my slavery.

Abo. Have you been long a slave?

Hot. Yes, many years.

Abo. And do you only curse?

Hot. Curse? only curse? I cannot conjure,
 To raise the spirits up of other men:
 I am but one. O! for a soul of fire,
 To warm, and animate our common cause,
 And make a body of us; then I would

Do.

Do something more than curse.

Abo. That body set on foot, you would be one,
A limb, to lend it motion?

H.t. I would be
The heart of it; the head, the hand, and heart.
Would I could see the day!

Abo. You will do all yourself?
H.t. I would do more

Than I shall speak: but I may find a time.

Abo. The time may come to you; be ready for't.
Methinks he talks too much: I'll know him more,
Before I trust him farther.

Slav. If he dares
Half what he says, he'll be of use to us.

Enter Blandford to them.

Blan. If there be any one among you here
That did belong to Oronoko, speak,
I come to him.

Abo. I did belong to him. *Abcan* my name.

Blun. You are the man I want; pray, come with me.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

Enter Oronoko and Imoinda.

Oro. I do not blame my father for his love:
(Tho' that had been enough to ruin me)

'Twas nature's fault, that made you like the sun,
The reasonable worship of mankind:
He could not help his adoration.

Age had not lock'd his senses up so close,
But he had eyes, that open'd to his soul,
And took your beauties in: he felt your pow'r,
And therefore I forgive his loving you.

But when I think on his barbarity,
That could expose you to so many wrongs;
Driving you out to wretched slavery,
Only for being mine; then I confess,

I wish

I wish I could forget the name of son,
That I might curse the tyrant.

Imo. I will bless him,
For I have found you here: heav'n only knows
What is reserv'd for us: but if we guess
The future by the past, our fortune must
Be wonderful, above the common size
Of good or ill; it must be in extremes:
Extremely happy, or extremely wretched.

Oro. 'Tis in our pow'r to make it happy now.

Imo. But not to keep it so.

Enter Blandford and Aboan.

Blan. My royal lord!
I have a present for you.

Oro. Aboan!

Abo. Your lowest slave.

Oro. My try'd and valu'd friend.
This worthy man always prevents my wants;
I only wish'd, and he has brought thee to me.
Thou art surpris'd: carry thy duty there;

[Aboan goes to Imoinda and falls at her feet.]
While I acknowledge mine, how shall I thank you?

Blan. Believe me honest to your interest,
And I am more than paid. I have secur'd,
That all your followers shall be gently us'd.
This gentleman, your chiefest favourite,
Shall wait upon your person, while you stay
Among us.

Oro. I owe every thing to you.

Blan. You must not think you are in slavery.

Oro. I do not find I am.

Blan. Kind heav'n has miraculously sent
Those comforts, that may teach you to expect
Its farther care, in your deliverance,

Oro. I sometimes think myself, heav'n is concern'd,
For my deliverance.

Blan. It will be soon;
You may expect it. Pray, in the mean time,
Appear as cheerful as you can among us.

You

You have some enemies, that represent
 You dangerous, and would be glad to find
 A reason, in your discontent, to fear :
 They watch your looks. But there are honest men,
 Who are your friends ; you are secure in them.

Oro. I thank you for your caution.

Blan. I will leave you :

And be assur'd, I wish your liberty.

[Exit.]

Abo. He speaks you very fair,

Oro. He means me fair.

Abo. If he should not, my lord.

Oro. If he should not !

I'll not suspect this truth : but if I did,
 What shall I get by doubting ?

Abo. You secure,
 Not to be disappointed : but besides,
 There's this advantage in suspecting him :
 When you put off the hopes of other men,
 You will rely upon your god-like self :
 And then you may be sure of liberty.

Oro. Be sure of liberty ! what dost thou mean ;
 Advising to rely upon myself ?
 I think I may be sure on't : we must wait :
 'Tis worth a little patience. [Turning to Imoinda.]

Abo. O my lord !

Oro. What dost thou drive at ?

Abo. Sir, another time

You would have found it sooner : but I see
 Love has your heart, and takes up all your thoughts.

Oro. And canst thou blame me ?

Abo. Sir, I must not blame you.

But as our fortune stands, there is a passion
 (Your pardon royal mistress, I must speak,)
 That would become you better than your love :
 A brave resentment ; which inspir'd by you,
 Might kindle and diffuse a generous rage.
 Among the slaves, to rouze and shake our chains,
 And struggle to be free.

Oro. How can we help ourselves ?

Abo. I knew you, when you would have found a way
 How,

How help ourselves? the very Indians teach us:
 We need but to attempt our liberty,
 And we may carry it. We have hands sufficient,
 Double the number of our masters force,
 Ready to be employ'd. What hinders us
 To set 'em at work? we want but you,
 To head our enterprize, and bid us strike;

Oro. What would you do?

Abo. Cut our oppressors throats.

Oro. And you would have me join in your design
 Of murder?

Abo. It deserves a better name:
 But be it what it will, 'tis justify'd
 By self-defence, and natural liberty.

Oro. I'll hear no more on't.

Abo. I am sorry for't.

Oro. Nor shall you think of it.

Abo. Not think of it!

Oro. No, I command you not.

Abo. Remember, Sir,

You are a slave yourself, and to command
 Is now another's right. Not think of it!
 Since the first moment they put on my chains,
 I've thought of nothing but the weight of 'em,
 And how to throw 'em off: can yours fit easy?

Oro. I have a sense of my condition,
 As painful, and as quick, as yours can be.
 I feel for my Imoinda and myself;
Imoinda much the tenderest part of me.
 But though I languish for my liberty,
 I would not buy it at the Christian price.
 Of black ingratitude: they shall not say,
 That we deserv'd our fortune by our crimes.
 Murder the innocent!

Abo. The innocent!

Oro. These men are so, whom you would rise against:
 If we ate slaves, they did not make us slaves;
 But bought us in an honest way of trade:
 As we have done before 'em, bought and sold
 Many a wretch, and never thought it wrong.

They

They paid our price for us, and we are now
 Their property, a part of their estate,
 To manage as they please. Mistake me not,
 I do not tamely say; that we should bear
 All they could lay upon us: but we find
 The load so light, so little to be felt,
 (Considering they have us in their power,
 And may inflict what grievances they please)
 We ought not to complain.

Abo. My royal lord!
 You do not know the heavy grievances,
 The toils, the labours, weary drudgeries,
 Which they impose; burdens, more fit for beasts,
 For senseless beasts to bear, than thinking men.
 Then if you saw the bloody cruelties
 They execute on every slight offence;
 Nay sometimes in their proud, insulting sport;
 How worse than dogs, they lash their fellow-creatures:
 Your heart would bleed for them. O could you know
 How many wretches lift their hands and eyes
 To you, for their relief.

Oro. I pity 'em,
 And wish I could with honesty do more.

Abo. You must do more, and may, with honesty.
 O royal sir, remember who you are:
 A prince, born for the good of other men;
 Whose god like office is to draw the sword
 Against oppression, and set free mankind:
 And this I'm sure, you think oppression now.
 What tho' you have not felt these miseries,
 Never believe you are oblig'd to them;
 They have their selfish reasons, may be, now,
 For using of you well: but there will come
 A time, when you must have your share of 'em.

Oro. You see how little cause I have to think so:
 Favour'd in my own person, in my friends;
 Indulg'd in all that can concern my care,
 In my Imoinda's soft society. [Embracing her]

Abo. And therefore would you lie contented down
 In the forgetfulness, and arms of love,

To get young princes for 'em ?

Oro. Say'it thou ! ha !

Abo. Princes, the heirs of empire, and the last

Of your illustrious lineage, to be born

To pamper up their pride, and be their slaves ?

Oro. *Imoinda* ! save me, save me from that thought !

Imo. There is no safety from it : I have long

Suffer'd it with a mother's labouring pains ;

And can no longer. Kill me, kill me now,

Whilst I am blest, and happy in your love ;

Rather than let me live to see you hate me ;

As you must hate me : me, the only cause ;

The fountain of these flowing miseries :

Dry up this spring of life, this poisonous spring,

That swells so fast, to overwhelm us all,

Oro. Shall the dear babe, the eldest of my hopes,

Whom I begot a prince, be born a slave ?

The treasure of this temple was design'd

T'enrich a kingdom's fortune : shall it here

Be seiz'd upon by vile unhallow'd hands,

To be employ'd in uses most prophane ?

Abo. In most unworthy uses ; think of that ;

And while you may, prevent it. O my lord !

Rely on nothing that they say to you.

They speak you fair, I know, and bid you wait.

But think what 'tis to wait on promises :

And promises of men, who know no tie

Upon their words, against their interest :

And where's their interest in freeing you ?

Imo. O ! where indeed, to lose so many slaves ?

Abo. Nay, grant this man, you think so much your friend,

Be honest, and intends all that he says :

He is but one ; and in a government,

Where, he confesses, you have enemies

That watch your looks ; what looks can you put on,

To please these men, who are before resolv'd

To rēad 'em their own way ? alas ! my lord !

If they incline to think you dangerous,

They have their knavish arts to make ouſo.

And

And then who knows how far their cruelty
May carry their revenge?

Iago. To every thing,
That does belong to you ; your friends, and me ;
I shall be torn from you, forced away,
Helpless, and miserable : shall I live
To see that day again ?

Oro. That day shall never come.

Abo. I know you are persuaded to believe
The governor's arrival will prevent
These mischiefs, and bestow your liberty :
But who is sure of that ? I rather fear
More mischiefs from his coming : he is young,
Luxurious, passionate, and amorous :
Such a complexion, and made bold by power,
To countenance all he is prone to do ;
Will know no bounds, no law against his lusts :
If, in a fit of his intemperance,
With a strong hand, he should resolve to seize,
And force my royal mistress from your arms,
How can you help yourself ?

Oro. Ha ! thou hast rouz'd
The lion in his den ; he stalks abroad,
And the wide forest trembles at his roar.
I find the danger now : my spirits start
At the alarm, and from all quarters come
To man my heart, the citadel of love.
Is there a power on earth to force you from me ?
And shall I not resist it ? not strike first
To keep, to save you ; to prevent that curse ?
This is your cause, and shall it not prevail ?
O ! you were born all ways to conquer me.
Now I am fashion'd to thy purpose : speak,
What combination, what conspiracy,
Wouldst thou engage me in ? I'll undertake
All thou wouldst have me now for liberty,
For the great cause of love and liberty.

Abo. Now, my great master, you appear yourself.
And since we have you join'd in our design,
It cannot fail us. I have muster'd up

The choicest slaves, men who are sensible
Of their condition, and seem most resolv'd :
They have their several parties.

Oro. Summon 'em,
Assemble 'em : I will come forth, and shew
Myself among them : if they are resolv'd,
I'll lead their foremost resolutions.

Abo. I have provided those will follow you.

Oro. With this reserve in our proceeding still,
The means that lead us to our liberty
Must not be bloody.

Abo. You command in all.

We shall expect you, Sir.

Oro. You shall not long.

[*Exeunt Oro. and Imo. at one door, Abo. at another.*

S C E N E III.

Welldon coming in before *Mrs. Lackitt*.

Wid. These unmannly Indians were something unseasonable, to disturb us just in the nick, Mr. *Welldon* : but I have the parson within call still, to do us the good turn.

Wel. We had best stay a little, I think, to see things settled again, had not we ? marriage is a serious thing, you know.

Wid. What do you talk of a serious thing, Mr. *Welldon* ? I think you have found me sufficiently serious : I have marry'd my son to your sister, to pleasure you ; and now I come to claim your promise to me, you tell me marriage is a serious thing.

Wel. Why, is it not ?

Wid. Fiddle faddle, I know what it is : 'tis not the first time I have been marry'd, I hope : but I shall begin to think you don't design to do fairly by me, so I shall.

Wel. Why indeed, *Mrs. Lackitt*, I am afraid I can't do as fairly as I would by you. 'Tis what you must know first or last ; and I should be the worst man in the world to

.to conceal it any longer; therefore I must own to you, that I am marry'd already.

Wid. Marry'd! you don't say so, I hope! how have you the conscience to tell me such a thing to my face! have you abus'd me then, fool'd and cheated me? What do you take me for, Mr. *Wellton*? Do you think I am to be serv'd at this rate? But you shan't find me the silly creature, you think me: I would have you to know, I understand better things, than to ruin my son without a valuable consideration. If I can't have you, I can keep my money. Your sister shan't have the catch of him she expected: I won't part with a shilling to 'em.

Wel. You made the match yourself, you know, you can't blame me.

Wid. Yes, yes, I can, and do blame you: you might have told me before you were marry'd.

Wel. I would not have told you now; but you follow'd me so close, I was forc'd to it: indeed I am marry'd in *England*; but 'tis, as if I were not; for I have been parted from my wife a great while; and to do reason on both sides, we hate one another heartily. Now I did design, and will marry you still, if you'll have a little patience.

Wid. A likely business truly.

Wel. I have a friend in *England* that I will write to, to poison my wife, and then I can marry you with a good conscience, if you love me, as you say you do; you'll consent to that, I'm sure.

Wid. And will he do it, do you think?

Wel. At the first word, or he is not the man I take him to be.

Wid. Well, you are a dear devil, Mr. *Welldon*; and would you poison your wife for me?

Wel. I would do any thing for you.

Wid. Well, I am mightily obliged to you. But 'twill be a great while before you can have an answer of your letter.

Wel. 'Twill be a great while indeed.

Wid. In the mean time, Mr. *Welldon* —

Wil. Why in the mean time———Here's company:
we'll settle that within, I'll follow you. [Exit *Widow*.

Enter Stanmore.

Stan. So, sir, you carry your business swimmingly :
you have stolen a wedding, I hear.

Wel. Ay, my sister is marry'd : and I am very near being run away with myself.

Stan. The widow will have you then.

Wel. You come very seasonably to my rescue : *Jack Stanmore* is to be had, I hope.

Stan. At half an hour's warning.

Wel. I must advise with you. [Exit.

S C E N E IV.

Oroonoko with Aboan, Hottman, and Slaves.

Oro. Impossible ! nothing's impossible :
We know our strength only by being try'd.
If you object the mountains, rivers, woods
Unpassable, that lie before our march :
Woods we can set on fire ; we swim by nature's
What can oppose us then, but we may tame ?
All things submit to virtuous industry ;
That we can carry with us, that is ours.

Slav. Great sir, we have attended all you said,
With silent joy and admiration :
And, were we only men, would follow such,
So great a leader, thro' the untry'd world.
But, oh ! consider we have other names,
Husbands and fathers, and have things more dear
To us than life, our children and our wives,
Unfit for such an expedition :
What must become of them ?

Oro. We will not wrong
The virtue of our women, to believe
There is a wife among 'em would refuse
To share her husband's fortune. What is hard,

We

We must make easy to 'em in our love : while we live,
 And have our limbs, we can take care of them ;
 Therefore I still propose to lead our march
 Down to the sea, and plant a colony :
 Where, in our native innocence, we shall live
 Free, and able to defend ourselves ;
 'Till stress of weather, or some accident
 Provide a ship for us.

Abo. An accident !

The luckiest accident presents itself ;
 The very ship, that brought and made us slaves,
 Swims in the river still ; I see no cause
 But we may seize on that.

Oro. It shall be so :

There is a justice in it pleases me.

Do you agree to it ?

[To the slaves.]

Omnis. We follow you.

Oro. You do not relish it.

[To Hotman.]

Hot. I am afraid.

You'll find it difficult and dangerous.

Abo. Are you the man to find the danger first ?

You shou'd have giv'n example. Dangerous !

I thought you had not understood the word ;

You, who would be the head, the hand, and heart :

Sir, I remember you, you can talk well ;

I will not doubt but you'll maintain your word.

Oro. This fellow is not right, I'll try him further.

[To Aboan.]

The danger will be certain to us all :

And death most certain in miscarrying.

We must expect no mercy, if we fail :

Therefore our way must be not to expect :

We'll put it out of expectation,

By death upon the place, or liberty.

There is no mean, but death or liberty.

There's no man here, I hope, but comes prepar'd

For all that can befall him.

Abo. Death is all :

In most conditions of humanity

To be desir'd, but to be shunn'd in none :

The remedy of many ; wish of some ;
 And certain end of all.
 If there be one amongst us, who can fear
 The face of death appearing like a friend,
 As in this cause of honour death must be ;
 How will he tremble, when he sees him drest
 In the wild fury of our enemies,
 In all the terrors of their cruelty ?
 For now if we should fall into their hands,
 Could they invent a thousand murd'ring ways,
 By racking torments, we should feel 'em all.

Hof. What will become of us ?

Oro. Observe him now. [To Abo. concerning Hof.
 I could die altogether, like a man :
 As you, and you, and all of us may do :
 But who can promise for his bravery
 Upon the rack ? where fainting, weary life,
 Hunged thro' every limb, is fore'd to feel
 An agonizing death of all its parts ?
 Who can bear this ? resolve to be empal'd ?
 His skin flead off, and roasted yet alive ?
 The quivering flesh torn from his brokeo bones,
 By burning pincers ? who can bear these pains ?

Hof. They are not to be born.

[Discovering all the confusion of fears]

Oro. You see him now, this man of mighty words !

Abo. How his eyes roil !

Oro. He cannot hide his fear :
 I try'd him this way, and have found him out.

Abo. I cou'd not have believ'd it. Such a blaze,
 And not a spark of fire !

Oro. His violence,
 Made me suspect him first : now I'm convinc'd.

Abo. What shall we do with him ?

Oro. He is not fit —

Abo. Fit ! hang him, he is only fit to be
 Just what he is, to live and die a slave :
 'The base companion of his servile fears..

Oro. We are not safe with him.

Abo. Do you think so ?

Oro.

Oro. He'll certainly betray us.

Abo. That he shan't;

I can take care of that : I have a way
To take him off his evidence.

Oro. What way ?

Abo. I'll stop his mouth before you, stab him here,
And then let him inform.

[Going to stab Hottman, Oroonoko tells him]

Oro. Thou art not mad ?

Abo. I would secure ourselves.

Oro. It shall not be this way ; nay, cannot be :
His murder would alarm all the rest.
Make 'em suspect us of barbarity,
And, may be, fall away from our design.
We'll not set out in blood : we have, my friends,
This night to furnish what we can provide,
For our security, and just defence.
If there be one among us we suspect
Of baseness, or vile fear, it will become
Our common care, to have our eyes on him :
I will not name the man.

Abo. You guess at him.

[To Hottman]

Oro. To-morrow, early as the breaking day,
We rendezvous behind the citron grove.
That ship secur'd, we may transport ourselves
To our respective homes : my father's kingdom
Shall open her wide arms to take you in,
And nurse you for her own, adopt you all,
All, who will follow me.

Onnes. All, all follow you.

Oro. There I can give you all your liberty ;
Bestow its blessings, and secure 'em yours.
There you shall live with honour, as becomes
My fellow-sufferers, and worthy friends :
This if we do succeed : but if we fall
In our attempt, 'tis nobler still to die,
Than drag the galling yoke of slavery.

[Extinct.]

A C T I V. S C E N E I.

Enter Welldon and Jack Stanmore.

Wel. Y O U see, honest *Jack*, I have been industrious for you: you must take some pains now to serve yourself.

J. Stan. Gad, Mr. *Welldon*, I have taken a great deal of pains: and if the widow speaks honestly, faith and troth, she'll tell you what a pains-taker I am.

Wel. Fie, fie, not me: I am her husband, you know; she won't tell me what pains you have taken with her: besides, she takes you for me.

J. Stan. That's true: I forgot you had marry'd her. But if you knew all —

Wel. 'Tis no matter for my knowing all, if she does —

J. Stan. Ay, ay, she does know, and more than ever she knew since she was a woman, for the time; I will be bold to say: for I have done —

Wel. The devil take you, for you'll never have done.

J. Stan. As old as she is, she has a wrinkle behind more than she had, I believe — For I have taught her, what she never knew in her life before.

Wel. What care I what wrinkles she has? or what you have taught her? if you'll let me advise you, you may; if not, you may prate on, and ruin the whole design.

J. Stan. Well, well, I have done.

Wel. Nobody, but your cousin, and you, and I, know any thing of this matter. I have marry'd Mrs. *Lackit*, and put you to bed to her, which she knows nothing of, to serve you: in two or three days I'll bring it about so, to resign up my claim, and with her consent, quietly to you.

J. Stan. But how will you do it?

Wel. That must be my business: in the mean time, if you should make any noise, 'twill come to her ears, and be impossible to reconcile her.

J. Stan.

J. Stan. Nay, as for that, I know the way to reconcile her; I warrant you.

Wel. But how will you get her money? I am marry'd to her.

J. Stan. That I don't know indeed.

Wel. You must leave it to me, you find; all the pains I shall put you to, will be to be silent: you can hold your tongue for two or three days?

J. Stan. Truly, not well, in a matter of this nature: should be very unwilling to lose the reputation of this night's work, and the pleasure of telling.

Wel. You must mortify that vanity a little: you will have time enough to brag and lie of your manhood, when you have her in a bare-fac'd condition to disprove you.

J. Stan. Well, I'll try what I can do: the hopes of her money must do it.

Wel. You'll come at night again? 'tis your own business.

J. Stan. But you have the credit on't.

Wel. 'Twill be your own another day, as the widow says. Send your cousin to me; I want his advice.

J. Stan. I want to be recruited, I'm sure, a good breakfast, and to bed: she has rock'd my cradle sufficiently.

[Exit.]

Wel. She would have a husband; and if all be, as he says, she has no reason to complain: but there's no relying on what the men say upon these occasions: they have the benefit of their bragging, by recommending their abilities to other women: there is a trading estate, that lives upon credit, and increases by removing it out of one bank into another. Now poor women have notwithstanding opportunities; we must keep our flocks dead by us, at home, to be ready for a purchase, when it comes, a husband, let him be never so dear, and be glad of him; or venture our fortunes abroad on such rotten security, that the principal and interest, nay very often our persons, are in danger. If the women would agree (which they never will) to call home their effects, how many proper gentlemen would sneak into another way of living,

ing, for want of being responsible in this? then husbands would be cheaper. Here comes the widow, she'll tell truth: she'll not bear false witness against her own interest, I know.

Enter Widow Lackitt.

Wel. Now, Mrs. Lackitt.

Wid. Well, well, *Lackitt*, or what you will now; now I am marry'd to you: I am very well pleas'd with what I have done, I assure you.

Wel. And with what I have done too, I hope.

Wid. Ah! Mr. *Weldon*! I say nothing, but you're a dear man, and I did not think it had been in you.

Wel. I have more in me than you imagine.

Wid. No, no, you can't have more than I imagine; 'tis impossible to have more: you have enough for any woman, in an honest way, that I will say for you.

Wel. Then I find you are satisfied.

Wid. Satisfied! no indeed; I'm not to be satisfied, with you or without you: to be satisfied, is to have enough of you; now, 'tis a folly to lie: I shall never think I can have enough of you. I shall be very fond of you: wou'd you have me fond of you? what do you tell me, to make me love you so well?

Wel. Can't you tell what?

Wid. Go; there's no speaking to you: you bring all the blood of one's body into one's face, so you do: why do you talk so?

Wel. Why, how do I talk?

Wid. You know how: but a little colour becomes me, I believe. How do I look to-day?

Wel. O! most lovingly, most amiably.

Wid. Nay, this can't be long a secret, I find, I shall discover it by my countenance.

Wel. The women will find you out, you look so chearfully.

Wid. But do I; do I really look so chearfully, so amiably? there's no such paint in the world as the natural glowing of a complexion. Let 'em find me out, if they please, poor creatures, I pity 'em: they envy me, I'm sure,

sure, and would be glad to mend their looks upon the same occasion. The young jil-flirting girls, forsooth, believe nobody must have a husband but themselves ; but I would have 'em to know there are other things to be taken care of, besides their green-fickness.

Wel. Ay, sure, or the physicians would have but little practice.

Wid. Mr. Welldon, what must I call you : I must have some pretty fond name or other for you ? what shall I call you ?

Wel. I thought you lik'd my own name.

Wid. Yes, yes, I like it ; but I must have a nick-name for you : most women have nick-names for their husbands —

Wel. Cuckold.

Wid. No, no ; but 'tis very pretty before company ; it looks negligent, and is the fashion, you know.

Wel. To be negligent of their husbands, it is indeed.

Wid. Nay then, I won't be in the fashion ; for I can never be negligent of dear Mr. Welldon : and to convince you, here's something to encourage you not to be negligent of me. [Gives him a purse and a little casket. Five hundred pounds in gold in this ; and jewels to the value of five hundred pounds more in this.

[Welldon opens the casket.

Wel. Ay, marry, this will encourage me indeed.

Wid. There are comforts in marrying an elderly woman, Mr. Welldon. Now a young woman wou'd have fancy'd she had paid you with her person, or had done you the favour.

Wel. What do you talk of young women ? you are as young as any of 'em, in every thing, but their folly and ignorance.

Wid. And do you think me so ? but I have no reason to suspect you. Was not I seen at your house this morning, do you think ?

Wel. You may venture again & you'll come at night, I suppose.

Wid. O dear ! at night ? so soon ?

Wel. Nay, if you think it so soon,

Wid.

Wid. O ! no, it is not for that Mr. *Well登*; but—
Wel. You won't come then.

Wid. Won't ! I don't say, I won't : that is not a word
 for a wife : if you command me—

Wil. To please yourself.

Wid. I will come to please you.

Wel. To please yourself, own it.

Wid. Well, well, to please myself then ; you're the
 strangest man in the world, nothing can 'scape you :
 you'll to the bottom of every thing.

Enter Daniel, Lucy following.

Dan. What would you have ? what do you follow me
 for ?

Luc. Why, mayn't I follow you ? I must follow you
 now all the world over.

Dan. Hold you, hold you there : not so far by a mile
 or two ; I have enough of your company already, by'r-lady ; and something to spare : you may go home to
 your brother, an you will ; I have no farther to do with
 you.

Wid. Why, *Daniel*, child, thou art not out of thy
 wits sure, art thou ?

Dan. Nay, marry, I don't know ; but I am very near,
 I believe ; I am alter'd for the worse mightily since you
 saw me ; and she has been the cause of it there.

Wid. How so, child ?

Dan. I told you before what wou'd come on't, of put-
 ting me to bed to a strange woman : but you would not
 be said nay.

Wid. She is your wife now, child, you must love her.

Dan. Why, so I did, at first

Wid. But you must love her always.

Dan. Always ! I lov'd her as long as I could, mother,
 and as long as loving was good, I believe, for I find now
 I don't care a fig for her.

Luc. Why, you lubberly, slovenly, misbegotten block-
 head—

Wid. Nay, mistress *Lucy*, say any thing else, and spare
 me : but as to his begetting, that touches me ; he it as-
 honestly.

honestly begotten, tho' I say it, that he is the worse again.

Luc. I see all good nature is thrown away upon you—

Wid. It was so with his father before him: he takes after him.

Luc. And therefore I will use you, as you deserve, you Tony.

Wid. Indeed he deserves bad enough; but don't call him out of his name, his name is *Daniel*, you know.

Dan. She may call me hermaphrodite, if she will, for I hardly know whether I'm a boy or a girl.

Wel. A boy, I warrant thee, as long as thou liv'st.

Dan. Let her call me what she pleases, mother, 'tis not her tongue that I am afraid of.

Luc. I will make such a beast of thee, such a cuckold!

Wid. O, pray, no, I hope, do nothing rashly, Mrs. *Lucy*.

Luc. Such a cuckold I will make of thee!

Dan. I had rather be a cuckold, than what you wou'd make of me in a week, I'm sure: I have no more manhood left in me already, than there is, saving the mark, in one of my mother's old under petticoats here.

Wid. Sirrah, sirrah, meddle with your wife's petticoats, and let your mother's alone, you ungracious bird, you,

[Beats him.]

Dan. Why is the devil in the woman? what have I said now? do you know, if you were ask'd, I trow? but you are all of a bundle; ev'n hang together; he that unties you, makes a rod for his own tail; and so he will find it, that has any thing to do with you.

Wid. Ay, rogue enough, you shall find it: I have a rod for your tail still.

Dan. No wife, and I care not.

Wid. I'll swinge you into better manners, you booby.

[Beats him off, Exit.]

Wel. You have consummated our project upon him.

Luc. Nay, if I have a limb of the fortune, I care not who has the whole body of the foot.

Wel. That you shall, and a large one, I promise you,

Luc. Have you heard the news? they talk of an English ship in the river.

Wel.

Wel. I have heard on't: and am preparing to receive it, as fast as I can.

Luc. There's something the matter too with the slaves, some disturbance or other; I don't know what 'tis.

Wel. So much the better still: we fish in troubled waters: we shall have fewer eyes upon us. Pray, go you home, and be ready to assist me in your part of the design.

Luc. I can't fail in mine.

[Exit.]

Wel. The widow has furnish'd me, I thank her, to carry it on. Now I have got a wife, 'tis high time to think of getting a husband. I carry my fortune about me; a thousand pounds in gold and jewels. Let me see— 'twill be a considerable trust: and I think, I shall lay it out to advantage.

Enter Stanmore.

Stan. So *Welldon*, *Jack* has told me of his success, and his hopes of marrying the widow by your means.

Wel. I have strain'd a point, *Stanmore*, upon your account, to be serviceable to your family.

Stan. I take it upon my account; and am very much oblig'd to you. But here we are all in an uproar.

Wel. So they say, what's the matter?

Stan. A mutiny among the slaves: *Oroonoko* is at the head of 'em. Our governor is gone out with his rascally militia against 'em, what it may come to nobody knows.

Wel. For my part, I shall do as well as the rest: but I'm concern'd for my sister, and cousin, whom I expect in the ship from *England*.

Stan. There's no danger of 'em.

Wel. I have a thousand pounds here, in gold and jewels, for my cousin's use, that I would more particularly take care of; 'tis too great a sum to venture at home; and I would not have her wrong'd of it; therefore, to secure it, I think my best way will be, to put it into your own keeping.

Stan. You have a very good opinion of my honesty.

[Takes the purse and casket.]

Wel. I have indeed; if any thing should happen to me,

in

in this bustle, as no body is secure of accidents, I know you will take my cousin into your protection and care.

Stan. You may be sure on't.

Wel. If you hear she is dead, as she may be, then I desire you to accept of the thousand pounds as a legacy, and token of my friendship; my sister is provided for.

Stan. Why, you amaze me: but you are never the nearer dying, I hope, for making your will?

Wel. Not a jot; but I love to be before-hand with fortune. If she comes safe; this is not a place for a single woman, you know; pray see her marry'd as soon as you can.

Stan. If she be as handsome as her picture, I can promise her a husband.

Wel. If you like her, when you see her, I wish nothing so much as to have you marry her yourself.

Stan. From what I have heard of her, and my engagements to you, it must be her fault, if I don't: I hope to have her from your own hand.

Wel. And I hope to give her to you, for all this.

Stan. Ay, ay, hang these melancholy reflections. Your generosity has engag'd all my services.

Wel. I always thought you worth making a friend.

Stan. You han't find your good opinion thrown away upon me: I am in your debt, and shall think so as long as I live.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

Enter on one side of the Stage, Oroonoko, Aboan, with the Slaves. Imoinda with a bow and quiver, the Women, some leading, others carrying their children upon their backs.

Oro. The women, with their children, fall behind.

Imoinda, you must not expose yourself:

Retire, my love: I almost fear for you.

Imo. I fear no danger: life or death I will Enjoy with you.

Oro. My person is your guard.

Abo. Now, sir, blame yourself: if you had not prevented my cutting his throat, that coward there had not discover'd us; he comes now to upbraid you.

Enter

Enter on the other side Governor, talking to Hottman, with his rabble.

Gov. This is the very thing I would have wish'd.
Your honest service to the government [To Hottman—
Shall be rewarded with your liberty.

Abo. His honest service ! call it what it is,
His villainy, the service of his fear :
If he pretends to honest services,
Let him stand out, and meet me like a man. [Advancing.

Oro. Hold, you ; and you who come against us, hold !
I charge you in a general good to all,
And wish I cou'd command you, to prevent
The bloody havock of the murd'ring sword.
I would not urge destruction uncompell'd :
But if you follow fate, you find it here.
The bounds are set, the limits of our lives :
Between us lies the gaping gulph of death,
To swallow all : who first advances——

Enter the Captain with his crew.

Capt. Here, here, here they are, governor :
What, seize upon my ship !
Come, boys, fall on——

[Advancing first, Oroonoko kills him.

Oro. Thou art fall'n indeed :
Thy own blood be upon thee.

Gov. Rest it there :
He did deserve his death. Take him away. [The body remov'd.

You see, sir, you, and those mistaken men
Must be our witnesses, we do not come As enemies, and thirsting for your blood ! If we desir'd your ruin, the revenge Of our companion's death, had push'd it on. But that we over-look, in a regard To common safety, and the public good.

Oro. Regard that public good : draw off your men ! And leave us to our fortune : we're resolv'd.

Gov. Resolv'd, on what ? your resolutions

Are broken, overturn'd, prevented, lost :
 What fortune now can you raise out of 'em ?
 Nay, grant we should draw off, what can you do ?
 Where can you move ? what more can you resolve ?
 Unless it be to throw yourselves away.
 Famine must eat you up, if you go on.
 You see, our numbers could with ease compel
 What we request ; and what do we request ?
 Only to save yourselves.

[*The women and their children gathering about the men.*
Oro. I'll here no more.
Women. Hear him, hear him. He takes no care of us.
Gov. To those poor wretches who have been seduc'd,
 And led away, to all, and every one,
 We offer a full pardon——

Oro. Then fall on. [Preparing to engage.
Gov. Lay hold upon't, before it be too late,
 Pardon and mercy.

[*The women clinging about the men, they leave Oroonoko,*
and fall upon their faces, crying out for pardon.
Slaves. Pardon, mercy, pardon.
Oro. Let 'em go all; now, governor, I see,
 I own the folly of my enterprize,
 The rashness of this action, and must blush
 Quite through this veil of night, a whitely shame,
 To think I could design to make those free
 Who were by nature slaves ; wretches design'd
 To be their masters dogs, and lick their feet.
 Whip, whip 'em to the knowledge of your gods,
 Your christian gods, who suffer you to be
 Unjust, dishonest, cowardly, and base,
 And give 'em your excuse for being so.
 I wou'd not live on the same earth with creatures,
 That only have the faces of their kind :
 Why should they look like men, who are not so ?
 When they put off their noble natures, for
 The groveling quality of down-taught beasts,
 I wish they had their tails.

Abo. Then we should know 'em.
Oro. We were too few before for victory.
 We're still know to die. [To Impinda, Aboan.

Enter Blandford.

Gov. Live, royal sir ;
 Live, and be happy long on your own terms :
 Only consent to yield, and you shall have
 What terms you can propose, for you, and yours.

Oro. Consent to yield ! shall I betray myself ?

Gov. Alas ! we cannot fear, that your small force,
 The force of two, with a weak woman's arm,
 Should conquer us. I speak in the regard
 And honour of your worth, in my desire
 And forwardness to serve so great a man.
 I would not have it lie upon my thoughts,
 That I was the occasion of the fall
 Of such a prince, whose courage carried on
 In a more noble cause, would well deserve
 The empire of the world.

Oro. You can speak fair.

Gov. Your undertaking, tho' it would have brought
 So great a loss on us, we must all say
 Was generous, and noble ; and shall be
 Regarded only as the fire of youth,
 That will break out sometimes in gallant souls ;
 We'll think it but the natural impulse,
 A rash impatience of liberty :
 No otherwise.

Oro. Think it what you will.
 I was not born to render an account
 Of what I do, to any but myself. [Blan. comes forward.]

Blan. I'm glad you have proceeded by fair means.
[To the Governor.]

I came to be a mediator.

Gov. Try what you can work upon him.

Oro. Are you come against me too ?

Blan. Is this to come against you ?

[Offering his sword to Oroonoko.

Unarm'd to put myself into your hands ?

I come, I hope, to serve you.

Oro. You have serv'd me :

I thank you for't : and I am pleas'd to think

You

You were my friend, while I had need of one :
But now 'tis past ; this farewell, and be gone.

[Embraces him.]

Blan. It is not past, and I must serve you still.
I would make up these breaches, which the sword
Will widen more ; and close us all in love.

Oro. I know what I have done, and I should be
A child to think they ever can forgive :
Forgive ! were there but that, I would not live
To be forgiven : is there a power on earth,
That I can ever need forgiveness from ?

Blan. You shall not need it.

Oro. No, I will not need it.

Blan. You see he offers you your own conditions,
For you and yours.

Oro. I must capitulate ?
Precariously compound, on stinted terms,
To save my life ?

Blan. Sir, he imposes none.
You make 'em for your own security.
If your great heart cannot descend to treat,
In adverse fortune, with an enemy :
Yet sure, your honour's safe, you may accept
Offers of peace, and safety from a friend.

Gov. He will rely on what you say to him : [To *Blan.*]
Offer him what you can, I will confirm
And make all good ; be you my pledge of trust.

Blan. I'll answer with my life for all he says.

Gov. Ay, do, and pay the forfeit if you please. [Aside.]

Blan. Consider, sir, can you consent to throw
That blessing from you, you so hardly found, [Of *Imo.*]
And so much valu'd once ?

Oro. *Imoinda* ! Oh !

'Tis she that holds me on this argument
Of tedious life : I could resolve it soon,
Were this curs'd being only in debate.
But my *Imoinda* struggles in my soul ;
She makes a coward of me : I confess
I am afraid to part with her in death :
And more afraid of life to lose her here.

Blan.

Blan. This way you must lose her, think upon
The weakness of her sex, made yet more weak
With her condition, requiring rest,
And soft indulging ease, to nurse your hopes,
And make you a glad father.

Oro. There I feel

A father's fondness, and a husband's love.
They seize upon my heart, strain all its strings,
To pull me to 'em, from my stern resolve.
Husband, and father! all the melting art
Of eloquence lives in those soft'ning names.
Methinks I see the babe, with infant hands,
Pleading for life, and begging to be born :
Shall I forbid his birth ; deny him light ?
The heav'nly comforts of all-cheering light ?
And make the womb the dungeon of his death ?
His bleeding mother his sad monument ?
These are the calls of nature, that call loud,
They will be heard, and conquer in their cause :
He must not be a man, who can resist 'em.
No; my Imoinda ! I will venture all
To save thee, and that little innocent :
The world may be a better friend to him,
Than I have found it. Now I yield myself :

[Gives up his sword.

The conflict's past, and we are in your hands.

[Several men get about Oroonoko and Aboan, and
seize them.

Gov. So you shall find you are. Dispose of them.
As I commanded you.

Blan. Good heav'n forbid ! you cannot mean —

Gov. This is not your concern.

[To Blandford who goes to Oroonoko.
I must take care of you. [To Imoinda.]

Imo. I'm at the end
Of all my care : here I will die with him. [Holding Oro.

Oro. You shall not force her from me. [He holds her.

Gov. Then I must [They force her from him.
Try other means, and conquer force by force :
Break, cut off his hold, bring her away.

Imo.

Imo. I do not ask to live, kill me but here.

Oro. O bloody dogs ! inhuman murderers !

[Imoinda forc'd out of one door by the governor, and
others. Oroonok and Aboan barr'd out of another.]

[Exeunt]

A C T V. S C E N E I.

Enter Stanmore, Lucy, and Charlott.

Stan. T IS strange we cannot hear of him : can nobody give an account of him ?

Luc. Nay, I begin to despair ; I give him for gone.

Stan. Not so, I hope.

Luc. There were so many disturbances in this devilish country ! would we had never seen it.

Stan. This is but a cold welcome for you, madam, after so troublesome a voyage.

Char. A cold welcome indeed, sir, without my cousin Welldon : he was the best friend I had in the world.

Stan. He was a very good friend of your's indeed, madam.

Luc. They have made him away, murder'd him for his money, I believe ; he took a considerable sum with him, I know, that has been his ruin.

Stan. That has done him no injury, to my knowledge : for this morning he put into my custody what you speak of, I suppose, a thousand pounds, for the use of this lady.

Char. I was always oblig'd to him ; and he has shewn his care of me, in placing my little affairs in such honourable hands.

Stan. He gave me a particular charge of you, madam ; very particular, so particular, that you will be surpris'd when I tell you.

Char. What, pray sir ?

Stan. I am engag'd to get you a husband, I promis'd

that before I saw you ; and now I have seen you, you must give me leave to offer you myself.

Luc. Nay, cousin, never be coy upon the matter ; to my knowledge, my brother always design'd you for this gentleman.

Stan. You hear, madam, he has given me his interest, and 'tis the favour I would have begg'd of him. Lord ! you are so like him —

Char. That you are oblig'd to say you like me for his sake.

Stan. I should be glad to love you for your own.

Char. If I should consent to the fine things you can say to me, how would you look at last, to find 'em thrown away upon an old acquaintance ?

Stan. An old acquaintance !

Char. Lord, how easily are you men to be impos'd upon ! I am no cousin newly arriv'd from *England*, nor I; but the very *Welldon* you wot of.

Stan. *Welldon* !

Char. Not murder'd nor made away, as my sister would hate you believe, but am in very good health, your old friend in breeches that was, and now your humble servant in petticoate.

Stan. I'm glad we have you again. But what service can you do me in petticoats, pray ?

Char. Can't you tell what ?

Stan. Not I, by my troth : I have found my friend, and lost my mistress, it seems, which I did not expect from your petticoats.

Char. Come, come, you have had a friend of your mistress long enough, 'tis high time now to have a mistress of your friend.

Stan. What do you say ?

Char. I am a woman, sir.

Stan. A woman !

Char. As arrant a woman as you would have had me but now, I assure you

Stan. And at my service ?

Char. If you have any for me in petticoats,

Stan. Yes, yes, I shall find you employment.

Char.

Char. You wonder at my proceeding, I believe.

Stan. 'Tis a little extraordinary, indeed.

Char. I have taken some pains to come into your favour.

Stan. You might have had it cheaper a great deal.

Char. I might have marry'd you in the person of my English cousin, but could not consent to cheat you, even in the thing I had a mind to.

Stan. 'Twas done as you do every thing.

Char. I need not tell you, I made that little plot, and carry'd it on only for this opportunity. I was resolv'd to see whether you lik'd me as a woman, or not : if I had found you indifferent, I would have endeavour'd to have been so too : but you say you like me, and therefore I have ventur'd to discover the truth.

Stan. Like you ! I like you so well, that I'm afraid you won't think marriage a proof on't : shall I give you any other ?

Char. No, no, I'm inclin'd to believe you, and that shall convince me. At more leisure I'll satisfy you how I came to be in man's cloaths ; for no ill, I assure you, tho' I have happen'd to play the rogue in 'em : they have assisted me in marrying my sister, and have gone a great way in befriending your cousin *Jack* with the widow. Can you forgive me for pimping for your family ?

Enter Jack Stanmore.

Stan. So, *Jack*, what news with you ?

J. Stan. I am the forepart of the widow, you know ; she's coming after with the body of the family, the young 'squire in her hand, my son-in-law that is to be, with the help of Mr. *Welldon*.

Char. Say you so, sir ? [Clapping *Jack* upon the back.

Enter Widow Lackitt with her son Daniel.

Wid. So, 'Mrs. Lucy, I have brought him about again, I have chastis'd him, I have made him as supple as a glove for your wearing, to pull on, or throw off, at your pleasure. Will you ever rebel again ? will you, firrah ? but come, come, down on your marrow-bones, and ask her

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forgive-

forgiveness. [Daniel kneels.] Say after me: Pray, forsooth wife.

Daniel. Pray forsooth wife.

Luc. Well, well, this is a day of good-nature, and so I take you into favour: but first take the oath of allegiance. [He kisses her hand, and rises.] If ever you do so again—

Dan. Nay marry if I do, I shall have the worst on't.

Luc. Here's a stranger, forsooth, would be glad to be known to you, a sister of mine, pray salute her.

[Starts at Charlott.

Wid. Your sister! Mrs. Lucy! what do you mean? This is your brother, Mr. Welldon; do you think I do not know Mr. Welldon?

Lucy. Have a care what you say: this gentleman's about marrying her: you may spoil all.

Wid. Fiddle, faddle, what! you would put a trick upon me.

Char. No faith, widow, the trick is over; it has taken sufficiently, and now I will teach you the trick, to prevent your being cheated another time.

Wel. How! cheated, Mr. Welldon!

Char. Why, ay, you will always take things by the wrong handle, I see you will have me, Mr. Welldon: I grant you I was Mr. Welldon a little while to please you, or so; but Mr. Stanmore here has persuaded me into a woman again.

Wid. A woman! pray let me speak with you. [Drawing her aside.] You are not in earnest, I hope? A woman!

Char. Really a woman.

Wid. Gads my life! I could not be cheated in every thing: I know a man from a woman at these years, or the devil's in't. Pray, did not you marry me?

Char. You wou'd have it so.

Wid. And did not I give you a thousand pounds this morning?

Char. Yes indeed, 'twas more than I deserv'd: but you had your pennyworth for your penny, I suppose: you seem'd to be pleas'd with your bargain.

Wid.

Wid. A rare bargain I have made on't, truly. I have laid out my money to fine purpose upon a woman.

Char. You would have a husband, and I provided for you as well as I could.

Wid. Yes, yes, you have provided for me.

Char. And you have paid me very well for't, I thank you.

Wid. 'Tis very well; I may be with child too, for ought I know, and may go look for the father.

Char. Nay if you think so, 'tis time to look about you indeed. Ev'n make up the matter as well as you can, I advise you as a friend, and let us live neighbourly and lovingly together.

Wid. I have nothing else for it, that I know now.

Char. For my part, Mrs. *Lackitt*, your thousand pounds will engage me not to laugh at you. Then my sister is marry'd to your son, he is to have half your estate, I know; and indeed they may live upon it, very comfortably to themselves, and very creditably to you.

Wid. Nay, I can blame nobody but myself.

Char. You have enough for a husband still, and that you may bestow upon honest *Jack Stanmore*.

Wid. Is he the man then?

Char. He is the man you are oblig'd to.

J. Stan. Yes, faith, widow, I am the man! I have done fairly by you, you find, you know what you have to trust to before hand.

Wid. Well, well, I see you will have me, ev'n marry me, and make an end of the busness.

Stan. Why, that's well said, now we are all agreed, and all provided for.

Enter a Servant to Stanmore.

Serv. Sir, Mr. *Blandford* desires you to come to him, and bring as many of your friends as you can with you.

Stan. I come to him. You'll all go along with me. Come, young gentleman, marriage is the fashion, you see, you must like it now.

Dan. If I don't, how shall I help myself?

Luc. Nay, you may hang your self in the noose, if you please, but you'll never get out with struggling.

Dan. Come then, let's ev'n jogg on in the old road. Cuckold, or worse, I must be now contented : I'm not the first has marry'd, and repented. [Exitus.]

SCENE II.

Enter Governor with Blandford, and Planters.

Blan. Have you no reverence of future fame ? No awe upon your actions, from the tongues, The censuring tongues of men, that will be free ? If you confess humanity, believe There is a God, or devil to reward Our doings here, do not provoke your fate. The hand of heav'n is arm'd against these crimes, With hotter thunder-bolts, prepar'd to shoot, And nail you to the earth, a sad example ; A monument of faithless infamy.

Enter Stanmore, J. Stanmore, Charlott, Lucy, Widow and Daniel.

So, Stanmore, you I know, the women too Will join with me : 'tis Oroonoke's cause, A lover's cause, a wretched woman's cause, That will become your intercession. [To the women.]

1 Plan. Never mind 'em, Governor ; he ought to be made an example for the good of the plantation.

2 Plan. Ay, ay, 'twill frighten the negroes from attempting the like again.

1 Plan. What, rise against their lords and masters ! at this rate no man is safe from his own slaves.

2 Plan. No, no more he is. Therefore one and all, Governor, we declare for hanging.

Om. Plan. Ay, ay, hang him, hang him.

Wid. What ! hang him ! O ! forbid it, Governor.

Char. *Luc.* We all petition for him.

J. Stan. They are for a holiday ; guilty or not, is not the busines, hanging is their sport.

Blan. We are not sure so wretched, to have these,

The

The rabble, judge for us : the changing croud ;
 The arbitrary guard of fortune's power,
 Who wait to catch the sentence of her frowns,
 And hurry all to ruin she condemns.

Stan. So far from farther wrong, that 'tis a shame
 He should be where he is : good Governor,
 Order his liberty : he yielded up
 Himself, his all, at your discretion.

Blas. Discretion ! no, he yielded on your word ;
 And I am made the cautionary pledge,
 The gage, and hostage of your keeping it.
 Remember, sir, he yielded on your word ;
 Your word ! which honest men will think should be
 The last resort of truth, and trust on earth :
 There's no appeal beyond it, but to heav'n :
 An oath is a recognizance to heav'n,
 Binding us over, in the courts above,
 To plead to the indictment of our crimes :
 That those who 'scape this world should suffer there.
 But in the common intercourse of men,
 (Where the dread Majesty is not invok'd,
 His honour not immediately concern'd,
 Not made a party in our interests,)
 Our word is all to be rely'd upon.

Wid. Come, come, you'll be as good as your word,
 we know.

Stan. He's out of all power of doing any harm now,
 if he were dispos'd to it.

Char. But he is not dispos'd to it.

Blas. To keep him, where he is, will make him soon
 Find out some desperate way to liberty :
 He'll hang himself, or dash out his mad brains.

Char. Pray try him by gentle means ; we'll all be
 sureties for him.

Om. All, all.

Lac. We will answer for him now.

Gov. Well, you will have it so, do what you please,
 just what you will with him, I give you leave. *[Exit.]*

Blas. We thank you, sir ; this way, pray come with me. *[Exit.]*

*The S C E N E drawn, shews Oroonoko upon his back,
his legs and arms stretched out, and bained to the ground.*

Enter Blandford, Stanmore, &c.

Blan. O miserable sight ! help every one,
Assist me all to free him from his chains.

[*They help him up, and bring him forward, looking down.*
Most injur'd prince ! how shall we clear ourselves ?
We cannot hope you will vouchsafe to hear,
Or credit what we say in the defence,
And cause of our suspected innocence.

Stan. We are not guilty of your injuries,
No way consenting to 'em ; but abhor,
Abominate, and loath his cruelty.

Blan. It is our curse, but make it not our crime,
A heavy curse upon us, that we must
Share any thing in common, ev'n the light,
The elements, and seasons, with such mes,
Whose principles, like the fam'd dragon's teeth,
Scatter'd, and sown, would shoot a harvest up
Of fighting mischiefs, to confound themselves,
And ruin all about 'em.

Stan. Profligates !
Whose bold *Titanian* impiety
Would once again pollute their mother earth,
Force her to teem with her old monstrous brood
Of giants, and forget the race of men.

Blan. We are not so : believe us innocent.
We come prepar'd with all our services,
To offer a redress of your base wrongs.
Which way shall we employ 'em ?

Stan. Tell us, sir,
If there is any thing that can atone ;
But nothing can ; that may be some amends —

Oro. If you would have me think you are not all
Confederates, all accessory to
The base injustice of your governor ;
If you would have me live, as you appear
Concern'd for me, if you would have me live

To

To thank, and bless you, there is yet a way
 To tie me ever to your honest love :
 Bring my *Imoinda* to me ; give me her,
 To charm my sorrows, and, if possible,
 I'll sit down with my wrongs ; never to rise
 Against my fate, or think of vengeance more :

Blan. Be satisfy'd, you may depend upon us,
 We'll bring her safe to you, and suddenly.

Cbar. We will not leave you in so good a work.

Wid. No, no, we'll go with you.

Blan. In the mean time

Endeavour to forget, fir, and forgive :
 And hope a better fortune.

[*Exeunt.*

Oroonoko alone.

Oro. Forget ! forgive ! I must indeed forget,
 When I forgive ; but while I am a man,
 In flesh, that bears the living marks of shame,
 The print of his dishonourable chains,
 My memory still rousing up my wrongs,
 I never can forgive this governor ;
 This villain ; the disgrace of trust, and place,
 And just contempt of delegated power.
 What shall I do ? if I declare myself,
 I know him, he will sneak behind his guard
 Of followers, and brave me in his fears.

Else, lion like, with my devouring rage,
 I would rush on him, fasten on his throat,
 Tear a wide passage to his treacherous heart,
 And that way lay him open to the world. [*Pausing.*
 If I should turn his christian arts on him,
 Promise him, speak him fair, flatter, and creep
 With fawning steps, to get within his faith,
 I could betray him then, as he has me.
 But am I sure by that to right myself ?
 Lying's a certain mark of cowardice :
 And when the tongue forgets its honesty,
 The heart and hand may drop their functions too,
 And nothing worthy be resolv'd, or done.
 The man must go together, bad, or good :

In one part frail, he soon grows weak in all.
 Honour shou'd be concern'd in honour's cause;
 That is not to be cur'd by contraries,
 As bodies are, whose health is often drawn
 From rankest poisons. Let me but find out
 An honest remedy, I have the hand,
 A misftring hand, that will apply it home.

[Exit.]

S C E N E *the Governor's house.**Enter Governor.*

Gov. I would not have her tell me, she consents;
 In favour of the sexes modesty,
 That still should be presum'd, because there is
 A greater impudence in owning it,
 Than in allowing all that we can do.
 This truth I know, and yet against myself,
 (So unaccountable are lovers ways)
 I talk, and lose the opportunities,
 Which love, and she, expects I should employ;
 Ev'n she expects; for when a man has said
 All that is fit, to save the decency,
 The women know the rest is to be done.
 I will not disappoint her.

[Going.]

Enter to him Blandford, the Stanmores, Daniel, Mrs Lackitt, Charlott, and Lucy.

Wid. O Governor! I'm glad we lit upon you.*Gov.* Why! what's the matter?

Char. Nay, nothing extraordinary. But one good action draws on another. You have given the prince his freedom; now we come a begging for his wife; you won't refuse us.

Gov. Refuse you. No, no, what have I to do to refuse you?

Wid. You won't refuse to send her to him, she means.*Gov.* I send her to him!*Wid.* We have promis'd him to bring her.

Gov. You do very well; 'tis kindly. [Ends of your] ev'n carry her to him, with all my heart.

Luc.

Luc. You must tell us where she is.

Gov. I tell you ! why, don't you know ?

Blan. Your servants say she's in the house.

Gov. No, no, I brought her home at first indeed ; But I thought it would not look well to keep her here : I remov'd her in the hurry, only to take care of her. What ! she belongs to you : I have nothing to do with her.

Char. But where is she now, sir ?

Gov. Why, faith, I can't say certainly : you'll hear of her at *Parham* house, I suppose : there, or thereabouts : I think I sent her there.

Blan. I'll have an eye on him.

[*Afide.*

[*Excuse all but the Governor.*

Gov. I have ly'd myself into a little time ; And must employ it : they'll be here again ; But I must be before 'em.

[*Going out, he meets Imoinda, and seizes her.*
Are you come !
I'll court no longer for a happiness
That is in mine own keeping : you may still
Refuse to grant, so I have power to take.
The man that asks deserves to be deny'd.

[*She disengages one hand, and draws his sword from
his side upon him ; Governor starts and retires, Bland-
ford enters behind him.*

Imo. He does indeed, that asks unworthily.

Blan. You hear her, sir, that asks unworthily.

Gov. You are no judge.

Blan. I am of my own slave.

Gov. Be gone, and leave us.

Blan. When you let her go.

Gov. To fasten upon you.

Blan. I must defend myself.

Imo. Help, murder, help.

[*Imoinda retreats towards the door, favour'd by Bland-
ford, when they are clos'd, she throws down the sword,
and runs out, governor takes up his sword, they fight,
a'ye shofe, and fall, Blandford upon him. Servants enter,
and part 'em.*

Q5

Gov.

Gov. She shall not 'scape me so. I've gone too far,
Not to go farther. Curse on my delay!
But yet she is, and shall be in my power.

Bian. Nay then it is the way of honesty :
I know you, and will save you from yourself.

Gov. All come along with me.

[*Exeunt.*

S C E N E *The last.*

Enter Oroonoko.

Oro. To honour bound ! and yet a slave to love !
I am distracted by their rival powers,
And both will be obey'd. O great revenge !
Thou raiser, and restorer of fal'n fame !
Let me not be unworthy of thy aid,
For stopping in thy course : I still am thine :
But can't forget I am *Imanda's* too.
She calls me from my wrongs to rescue her.
No man condemn me, who has ever felt
A woman's power, or try'd the force of love :
All tempers yield, and soften in those fires ;
Our honours, interests resolving down,
Run in the gentle current of our joys :
But not to sink, and drown our memory :
We mount again to action, like the sun,
That rises from the bosom of the sea,
To run his glorious race of light anew,
And carry on the world. Love, love will be
My first ambition, and my fame the next.

Enter Aboan bloody.

My eyes are turn'd against me, and combine
With my sworn enemies, to represent
This spectacle of honour. *Aboan!*
My ever faithful friend !

Abo. I have no name,
That can distinguish me from the vile earth,
To which I'm going : a poor, abject worm,
That crawl'd a while upon a bustling world,
And now am trampled to my dust again.

Oro. I see thee gash'd, and mangled.

Abo.

Abo. Spare my shame

To tell how they have us'd me: but believe
The hangman's hand would have been merciful.
Do not you scorn me, sir, to think I can
Intend to live under this infamy.

I do not come for pity, to complain.

I've spent an honourable life with you;
The earliest servant of your rising fame,
And would attend it with my latest care:
My life was yours, and so shall be my death.

You must not live.

Bending, and sinking, I have dragg'd my steps
Thus far, to tell you that you cannot live:
To warn you of those ignominious wrongs,
Whips, rods, and all the instruments of death,
Which I have felt, and are prepar'd for you.
This was the duty that I had to pay.

'Tis done, and now I beg to be discharg'd.

Oro. What shall I do for thee?

Abo. My body tires,

And will not bear me off to liberty:
I shall again be taken, made a slave.
A sword, a dagger yet would rescue me.
I have not strength to go to find out death,
You must direct him to me.

Oro. Here he is, [Gives him a dagger.]
The only present I can make thee now:
And next the honourable means of life,
I would bestow the honest means of death.

Abo. I cannot stay to thank you. If there is
A being after this, I shall be yours
In the next world; your faithful slave again.
This is to try [Stabs himself.] I had a living sense
Of all your royal favours, but this last
Strikes thro' my heart. I will not say farewell,
For you must follow me.

[Dies.]

Oro. In life, and death,
The guardian of my honour! Follow thee!
I should have gone before thee: then perhaps
Thy fate had been prevented. All his care

Was

Was to preserve me from the barbarous rage
 That worry'd him, only for being mine.
 Why, why, ye gods! why am I so accurst,
 That it must be a reason of your wrath,
 A guilt, a crime sufficient to the fate
 Of any one, but to belong to me?
 My friend has found it, and my wife will soon:
 My wife! the very fear's too much for life:
 I can't support it. Where? Imoinda! Oh!

[Going out, she meets him, running into his arms.]

Thou bosom-softness! down of all my cares!
 I could recline my thoughts upon this breast
 To a forgetfulness of all my griefs,
 And yet be happy: but it will not be.
 Thou art disorder'd, pale, and out of breath!
 If fate pursues thee, find a shelter here.
 What is it thou wouldst tell me?

Imo. 'Tis in vain to call him villain.

Oro. Call him governor: is it not so?

Imo. There's not another sure.

Oro. Villain's the common name of mankind here;
 But his most properly. What! what of him?
 I fear to be resolv'd, and must enquire.
 He had thee in his power.

Imo. I blush to think it.

Oro. Blush! to think what?

Imo. That I was in his power.

Oro. He cou'd not use it?

Imo. What can't such men do?

Oro. But did he? durst he?

Imo. What he cou'd, he dar'd.

Oro. His own gods damn him then! for ours have none,
 No punishment for such unheard-of crimes.

Imo. This monster, cunning in his flatteries,
 When he had weary'd all his useless arts,
 Leapt out, fierce as a beast of prey, to seize me.
 I trembl'd, fear'd.

Oro. I fear and tremble now.

What cou'd preferre thee? what deliver thee? and you?

Imo. That wretched man; you us'd to call your friend.

Oro. *Blandford?*

Imo. Came he, and sav'd me from his rage.

Oro. He was a friend indeed to rescue thee!

And for his sake, I'll think it possible

A christian may be yet an honest man.

Imo. Oh! did you know what I have struggled through,
To save me yours, sure you would promise me
Never to see me forc'd from you again.

Oro. To promise thee! O! do I need to promise?
But there is now no farther use of words.
Death is security for all our fears.

[Shows Aboan's body on the floor.
And yet I cannot trust him.

Imo. *Aboan!*

Oro. Mangled and torn, resolv'd to give me time
To fit myself for what I must expect?
Groan'd out a warning to me, and expir'd.

Imo. For what you must expect?

Oro. Would that were all.

Imo. What! to be butcher'd thus——

Oro. Just as thou see'st.

Imo. By barbarous hands, to fall at last their prey!

Oro. I have run the race with honour, shall I now
Lag, and be overtaken at the goal?

Imo. No.

Oro. I must look back to thee.

[Tenderly.

Imo. You shall not need.

I'm always present to your purpose, say,
Which way would you dispose me?

Oro. Have a care,
Thou'rt on a precipice, and dost not see
Whither that question leads thee. O! too soon
Thou dost enquire what the assembled gods
Have not determin'd, and will latest doom.
Yet this I know of fate, this is most certain,
I cannot, as I would, dispose of thee;
And, as I ought, I dare not. Oh Iminda!

Imo. Alas! that sigh! why do you tremble so?
Nay then 'tis bad indeed, if you can weep.

Oro. My heart runs over, if my gushing eyes

Betray

Betray a weakness which they never knew,
 Believe, thou, only thou couldst cause these tears;
 The gods themselves conspire with faithless men
 To our destruction.

Imo. Heav'n and earth our foes!

Oro. It is not always granted to the great,
 To be most happy: if the angry pow'rs
 Repent their favours, let 'em take 'em back:
 The hopes of empire, which they gave my youth,
 By making me a prince, I here resign.
 Let 'em quench in me all those glorious fires,
 Which kindled at their beams; that lust of fame,
 That sever of ambition, restless still,
 And burning with the sacred thirst of sway,
 Which they inspir'd, to qualify my fate,
 And make me fit to govern under them,
 Let 'em extinguish. I submit myself
 To their high pleasure, and devoted bow
 Yet lower, to continue still a slave;
 Hopeless of liberty: and if I could
 Live after it, would give up honour too,
 To satisfy their vengeance, to avert
 This only curse, the curse of losing thee.

Imo. If heav'n could be appeas'd, these cruel men
 Are not to be entreated, or believ'd:
 O! think on that, and be no more deceiv'd.

Oro. What can we do?

Imo. Can I do any thing?

Oro. But we were born to suffer,

Imo. Suffer both,
 Both die, and so prevent 'em.

Oro. By thy death!

O! let me hunt my travell'd thoughts again;
 Range the wide waste of desolate despair;
 Start any hope. Alas! I lose myself.
 'Tis pathless, dark, and barren all to me.
 Thou art my only guide, my light of life,
 And thou art leaving me: send out thy beams
 Upon the wing; let them fly all around,
 Discover every way: is there a dawn,

A glim;

A glimmering of comfort? the great God,
That rises on the world, must shine on us.

I. mo. And see us set before him.

Oro. Thou bespeak'st,
And goest before me.

I. mo. So I would, in love:

In the dear unsuspected part of life,
In death for love. Alas! what hopes for me?
I was preserv'd but to acquit myself,
To beg to die with you.

Oro. And can't thou ask it?

I never durst inquire into myself
About my fate, and thou resolv'st it all.

I. mo. Alas! my lord! my fate's resolv'd in yours.

Oro. O! keep thee there: let not thy virtue shrink
From my support, and I will gather strength,
Fast as I can, to tell thee —

I. mo. I must die.

I know 'tis fit, and I can die with you.

Oro. O! thou hast banish'd hence a thousand fears,
Which sickened at my heart, and quite unman'd me.

I. mo. Your fear's for me, I know you fear'd my strength,
And could not overcome your tenderness,
To pass this sentence on me: and indeed
There you were kind, as I have always found you,
As you have ever been: for tho' I am
Refign'd, and ready to obey my doom,
Methinks it should not be pronounc'd by you.

Oro. O! that was all the labour of my grief.
My heart, and tongue forsook me in the strife:
I never could pronounce it.

I. mo. I have for you, for both of us.

Oro. Alas! for me! my death
I could regard as the last scene of life,
And act it thro' with joy, to have it done:
But then to part with thee —

I. mo. 'Tis hard to part.
But parting thus, as the most happy must,
Parting in death, makes it the easier.
You might have thrown me off, forsaken me,

And

And my misfortunes : that had been a death
Indeed of terror, to have trembled at.

Oro. Forsaken ! thrown thee off !

Imo. But 'tis a pleasure more than life can give,
That with unconquer'd passion to the last,
You struggle still, and fain would hold me to you.

Oro. Ever, ever, and let those stars, which are my
enemies,

Witness against me in the other world,
If I would leave this mansion of my bliss,
To be the brightest ruler of their skies.

O ! that we could incorporate, be one, [Embracing her.
One body, as we have been long one mind :
That blended so, we might together mix,
And losing thus our beings to the world,
Be only found to one another's joys.

Imo. Is this the way to part ?

Oro. Which is the way ?

Imo. The God of love is blind, and cannot find it;
But quick, make haste, our enemies have eyes
To find us out, and shew us the worst way
Of parting ; think on them.

Oro. Why dost thou wake me ?

Imo. O ! no more of love,

For if I listen to you, I shall quite
Forget my dangers, and desire to live.
I can't live yours. [Takes up the dagger.

Oro. There all the stings of death
Are shot into my heart—what shall I do ?

Imo. This dagger will instruct you. [Gives it him.

Oro. Ha ! this dagger !
Like fate, it points me to the horrid deed.

Imo. Strike, strike it home, and bravely save us both.
There is no other safety.

Oro. It must be—
But first a dying kiss— [Kisses her.
This last embrace— [Embracing her.
And now—

Imo. I'm ready.

Oro. O ! where shall I strike ?

Is there a smallest grain of that lov'd body
 That is not dearer to me than my eyes,
 My bosom'd heart, and all the life-blood there?
 Bid me cut off these limbs, hew off these hands,
 Dig out these eyes, tho' I would keep them last
 To gaze upon thee: but to murder thee!
 The joy, and charm of every ravish'd sense,
 My wife! forbid it nature.

Imo. 'Tis your wife,
 Who on her knees conjures you. O! in time
 Prevent those mischiefs that are falling on us.
 You may be hurry'd to a shameful death,
 And too dragg'd to the vile governor:
 Then I may cry aloud: when you are gone,
 Where shall I find a friend again to save me?

Oro. It will be so. Thou unexampled virtue!
 Thy resolution has recover'd mine:
 And now prepare thee.

Imo. Thus with open arms,
 I welcome you, and death.

[He drops his dagger as he looks on her, and throws
 himself on the ground.

Oro. I cannot bear it.
 O let me dash ag'inst this rack of fate,
 Dig up this earth, tear, tear her bowels out,
 To make a grave, deep as the center down,
 To swallow wide, and bury us together.
 It will not be. O! then some pitying God
 (If there be one a friend to innocence)
 Find yet a way to lay her beauties down
 Gently in death, and save me from her blood.

Imo. O rise, 'tis more than death to see you thus.
 I'll ease your love, and do the deed myself.—
 [She rakes up the dagger, berises in haste to take it from him]

Oro. O! hold, I charge thee, hold.

Imo. Tho' I must own
 It would be nobler for us both from you.

Oro. O! for a whirlwind's wing to hurry us
 To yonder cliff, which frowns upon the flood;
 That in embraces lock'd we might plunge in,

And

And perish thus in one another's arms.

Imo. Alas! what shout is that?

Oro. I see 'em coming.

They shall not overtake us. This last kiss:
And now farewell.

Imo. Farewell, farewell for ever.

Oro. I'll turn my face away, and do it so.

Now, are you ready?

Imo. Now. But do not grudge me
The pleasure in my death of a last look,
Pray look upon me——now I'm satisfied.

Oro. So fate must be by this.

[Going to stab her, he stops short, she lays her hands on
his, in order to give the blow.

Imo. Nay then I must assist you.
And since it is the common cause of both,
'Tis just that both should be employ'd in it.
Thus, thus 'tis finish'd, and I bless my fate, [Stabs herself.
That where I liv'd, I die, in these lov'd arms. [Dies.

Oro. She's gone. And now all's at an end with me.
Soft, lay her down. O we will part no more.

[Throws himself by her.
But let me pay the tribute of my grief,
A few sad tears to thy lov'd memory,
And then I follow—— [Weeps over her.
But I stay too long. [A noise again.
The noise comes nearer. Hold, before I go,
There's something would be done. It shall be so.
And then, *Imoinda*, I'll come all to thee. [Rises.

Blanford, and his party, enters before the Governor and his
party, swords drawn on both sides.

Gov. You strive in vain to save him, he shall die.

Blan. Not while we can defend him with our lives.

Gov. Where is he?

Oro. Here's the wretch whom you would have.

Put up your swords, and let not civil broils

Engage you in the cursed cause of one

Who cannot live, and now entreats to die.

This

This object will convince you.

Blan. 'Tis his wife! [They gather about the body.]
Alas! there was no other remedy.

Gov. Who did the bloody deed?

Oro. The deed was mine:

Bloody I know it is, and I expect
Your laws should tell me so. Thus self-condemn'd,
I do resign myself into your hands,
The hands of justice—but I hold the sword
For you—and for myself.

[Stabs the Governor, and himself, then throws himself
by Imoinda's body.]

Stan. He has kill'd the Governor, and stab'd himself.

Oro. 'Tis as it should be now. I have sent his ghost
To be a witness of that happiness
In the next world, which he deny'd us here. [Dies.]

Blan. I hope there is a place of happiness
In the next world for such exalted virtue.
Pagan or unbeliever, yet he liv'd
To all he knew: and if he went astray,
There's mercy still above to set him right.
But christians guided by the heav'nly ray,
Have no excuse if we mistake our way. [Exeunt omnes.]

E P I L O G U E:

Written by Mr. CONGREVE, and spoken by Mrs.
VERBRUGGEN.

YOU see we try all shapes, and shifts, and arts,
To tempt your favours, and regain your hearts.
We weep, and laugh, join mirth and grief together,
Like rain and sun-shine mixt, in April weather.
Your different tastes divide our poet's cares :
One foot the sock, t'other the buskin wears :
Thus while he strives to please, he's forc'd to do't,
Like Volscius, bip-bop, in a single boot.
Critics, he knows, for this may damn his books :
But he makes feasts for friends, and not for cooks.
Tho' errant-knights of late no favour find,
Sure you will be to ladies-errant kind.
To follow fame, knights-errant make profession :
We dast-sels fly, to save our reputation : }
So they, their valour show, we, our discretion.
To lands of monsters, and fierce beasts they go : }
We, to those islands, where rich husbands grow : }
Tho' they're no monsters, we may make 'em so.
If they're of English growth, they'll bear't with patience :
But save us from a spouse of Oroonoko's nations ! }
Then bless your stars, you happy London wives,
Who love at large, each day, yet keep your lives : }
Nor envy poor Imoinda's deating blindness,
Who thought her husband kill'd her out of kindness.
Death with a husband ne'er had shown such charms,
Had she once dy'd within a lover's arms.
Her error was from ignorance proceeding : }
Poor soul ! she wanted some of our town-breeding.
Forgive this Indian's fondness of her spouse ; }
Their law no christian liberty allows : }
Alas ! they make a conscience of their vows ! }
If virtue in a beaten be a fault ; }
Then damn the beaten school, where she was taugt.
She might have learn'd to cuckold, jilt, and sham,
Had Covent-Garden been in Surinam.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

